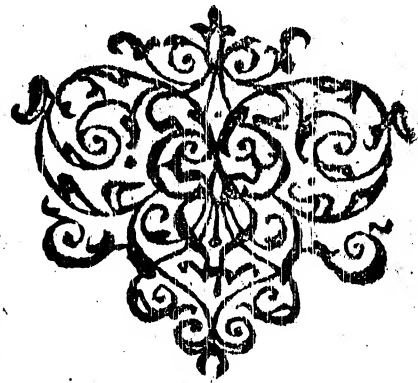


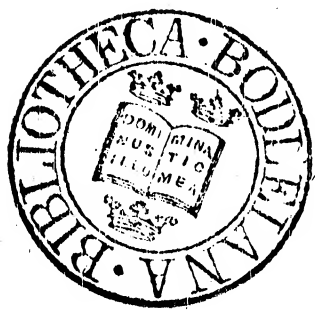
AN  
Excellent Treatise  
of Consideration and  
*Prayer.*

Written by the same Au-  
thor, F. LEVVE de GRANADA,  
in Portugall: and annexed to his  
*Booke of MEDITA-*  
TIONS.



L O N D O N  
Printed by Iohn Harison for  
William Wood, and are to bee sold  
at his Shop at the West end  
of Paules Church.

1 6 0 1.



To the worshipfull and  
his euer approued fatherly  
good friend, Maister Iohn Bani-  
ster Chirurgion, and licentiate  
in Physick, health & happines.

**F**ather, receiue at your sons  
hand this excellent treatise,  
the true testimonie of my vn-  
fained affection: and some duti-  
full remembrance for so many fa-  
uours I haue receiued from you.

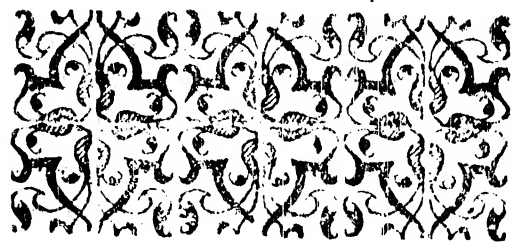
To your learned Iudgement I  
commende the goodnesse of the  
worke: which as heere tofore it  
hath been of most singular regard  
among the best, so can it not endure  
any reproch now that may come  
from the worst. So praying for the  
long life of my louing good fa-  
ther: humbly I take my leaue.

---

*The Phisicke Art  
For sicke and sore doth teach  
A soueraigne salue,  
to ease thy griping grieve.  
But onely they  
who sacred scripture preach,  
Haue wherewithall  
to work thy soules reliefe.*

*Ply therefore them  
that Phisicke doe professe,  
The way to ease  
thy bodies sore and smart.  
But the defaults  
of soule for to redresse,  
Lay vp this little  
volume in thy hart.*

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Of the great profit  
and necessitie of Con-  
sideration.

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CHAP. I.

**F**Orsomuch as in the exercise  
of Consideration, it cannot  
bee, but that some labour and  
paines must needs bee taken  
as well by reason of the imploying  
and occupying of the time, which  
it requireth of vs euery day: as also  
in regard of the quieting, and close  
recollecting of the hart, (which is a  
thing very requisite for the same,) I  
think it therefore very necessary be-  
fore al other things, to declare here,  
what great fruites and commodities  
doe ensue of this exercise, to the in-  
tent that the heart of man, which  
without great promises and allure-

A a 3                   ments

ments is not moued to take great paines, may by this meane bee the more moued and prouoked, to the loue of this holy exercise, and to bestow greater paines and labour therein.

*Consideratiō  
helpeth al  
vertues in  
their exer-  
cises*

Now the greatest commendation wee can giue to this vertue, is this, that it is a greater helper & furtherer of all other vertues. I meane not in supplying the proper office of them, but in helping the in their exercise. Infomuch, that like as deuotion is a generall stirrer and prouoker vnto all vertues (as one of the Fathers affirmeth,) and as the hearing of a Sermon, (if it be heard with such attention and deuotion as it ought to be,) is also an exercise that moueth vs, not to any one vertue alone, but to all vertues, (forso much as each good instruction is directed to this end:) euen so likewise is Consideration a great help & furtherance, not onely to any one vertue alone, but vnto all kinde of vertues. For there is no more difference betweene a Sermon and Consideration, than is betweene the reading of a lesson, & the repetition of the same reading,  
or

or betweene the meate that is set before vs in a dish, and the same meate when it is digested and concocted in the stomacke.

Now this is one of the greatest and most assured praises wee can giue to this vertue. For by this meanes it putteth not away the labours of other vertues, but rather maketh prouision how to helpe & further them in their labors, yea, and stirreth and prouoketh them thereunto. This is the thing which by the grace of God we intend now to proue verie manifestly in this place.

*Of those vertues that are common, both to a Christian and an Infidell: and what vertues are peculiar and proper to a Christian onely.*

FOR the better vnderstanding whereof, it is to be known, that among vertues some be common both to the Christian and to the Pagan Philosopher. (as those foure that be called Cardinall vertues,) to wit, Prudence, Iustice, Fortitude, and Temperance. Of which vertues the Philosophers vnderstood, and wrote

*Cardinall  
vertues.*



8 *The great profit*

*Theologicall  
vertues.*

very much.) Other vertues there be that are proper and peculiar vnto a Christian onely, in that he is a Christian; whereof the Pagan Philosophers neither knew nor wrote any thing at al; or if they did, it was surely verie little. These are principally those three most noble vertues, called Theologicall vertues, to wit; faith Hope, and Charitie. Which haue for their obiekt Almighty God himselfe, and their proper office is, to dispose & direct a man towardses him. These Theologicall vertues haue the empire and soueraigntie ouer all other inferior vertues, and therefore they moue and prouoke them to do their operations, whensoever the same is expedient for their seruice.

*Religion.*

*Deuotion.*

After these there followe other very principall & excellent vertues, (which be very neere of affinitie vnto them.) As the vertue, called Religion; whose obiekt is the seruice and honour of God. The vertue, called Deuotion, which is the act and exercise of the same religion, and the office of it is, to make vs verie prompt and ready, to doe all such things as appertaine vnto his seruice. The

*Feare*

*of Consideration.*

9

*Feare of God*, which refraineth and brideleth vs from sinne. *Humilitie*, which is also after a sort (as a learned Father affirmeth) the roote & foundation of all vertues. And Repentance, which is the gate of our salvation; whereunto appertaineth, the sorrow & griefe for our life past, and withall, a firme purpose and determination, to amend our life in time to come.

*The feare of  
God.*

*Humilitie*

*Repentance.*

Of all these vertues the Pagan Philosophers vnderstood very litle, or nothing at all; notwithstanding that these be the vertues, that haue the soueraignty and principality ouer al others, yea, they be the roots & fountaines of all our weale. First, because (for the most part) they be spirituall vertues, that haue the accomplishment of their perfection in the inward part of our soule, (where all the beauty of the daughter of the King standeth:) and secondlie, because all these vertues (faith excepted) be affectiue vertues, and consequently, they be vnto vs great motions and prouocations to doe good workes. Wherein the prouidence of the grace of God woderfully appea-

*Psal. 45. 74*

*A a 5*

*reth.*

10 *The great profit*  
 reth. For like as Nature hath prouided for vs naturall affections & desires, that should be (as it were) certaine spurres, to prouoke vs to doe all such thinges as are requisite for our naturall life; euen so likewise hath the grace of God prouided for vs other supernaturall affectiōs, that might be also spurs and prouocations vnto vs, to do all such thinges as are behoouefull for our spiritual life. And such bee these vertues before mentioned: to wit, Loue, Sorrowe, Feare, and Hope, with the rest, without the which vertues, the spirituall life were like a Barge without oares, or like a ship without sailes. For so much as without these vertues, wee should not haue any thing to moue & prouoke vs to doe good works.

For (considering that the way of vertue is so sharpe and full of difficultie) what should become of vs, if wee had not these spurs and prouocations of Loue, of Feare, and of Hope, to spur & pricke vs forwards to labour and trauell in the same? For this cause therefore are these vertues so much commended. For besides that they are such principall ver-

*of Consideration.* 11

vertues, (as we haue already declared,) they bee also very great prouocations and motions, to moue vs to doe good workes.

This foundation being now laid, *why the exercise of consideration is so much commended.*  
 I say, that the greatest praise wee giue to the vertue of Consideration is, that the same is a great minister and helper vnto all these vertues, as well of the one sort as of the other, according as wee will now declare. Where also it shall appeare that the commendation wee giue to this vertue, is not so much in respect of the vertue it selfe, as for the seruice and commoditie it bringeth to other vertues.

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*How Consideration helpeth Faith.*

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§. I.

NOW therefore to take our first *Faith is the beginning and foundation of the Christian life.*  
 beginning of Faith: it is manifest, that faith is the first beginning and foundation of all the Christian life. For Faith maketh vs to beleue, that Almighty GOD is our Creator, our Governour, and Redee-  
*Heb. 11. 6.*

12 *The great profit*

Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our Iustifier, our Glorifier; to bee short, our beginning, and our last end.

Faith is that which teacheth vs, that there is another life after this, and that there shal be a general iudgment of all our workes, and that wee shall receiue either euerlasting glorie for the good, or els euerlasting paine for the euill. And it is cleare, that the faith and beliefe men haue in these things, brideleth their heartes, and caueth them to stand in awe, and to liue in the feare of God. For if Faith were not among vs, as a meane to bridle and direct vs heerein, what (trow yee) would become of the life of man? And therefore the Prophet said: *That the iust man liueth by Faith:* because Faith (by meanes of the representation and Consideration of those things that it teacheth vs) prouoketh vs to refraine from sinne and wickednesse, and to follow vertue and goodnesse. And this is the cause why the Apostle willet vs to take Faith as a shield, against all the fire darts of the enemy. For certainly there is no better shield against the darts of sinne, then to call those things

*Faith causeth men to liue in the feare of God.*

Rom. 1.17

Heb. 10.38

Gala. 3.11

Abac. 2.4.

Eph. 6.16.

*of Consideration.* 13

things to minde, that faith hath reuealed vnto vs against the same.

Wherefore, that this faith may worke this effect in vs, it is verie requisite, that wee doe sometimes ponder and consider in our minds with good attention and deuotion, such things as our faith teacheth vs. For if we doe not so, it seemeth, that our faith shall bee vnto vs, as it were a Letter closed vp and sealed, in which although there come notable important newes of very great sorrow or ioy: yet it mooueth vs not at all, neither to the one nor to the other, no more then if wee had receiued no Letter at all. And the reason is, because wee haue not opened the Letter, nor considered what things are contained in it.

Now, what thing could bee said more aptly, or more to the purpose, touching the faith of the wicked and dissolute Christians? For surely there cannot be things of greater terrour and ioy, then those are, which our Faith declareth vnto vs. But the wicked Christians, because they doe neuer open this Letter, to see what things bee contained in it, (I meane hereby,

*Unlesse wee meditate vpon the miseries of our faith, our faith is as it were a Letter closed vp and sealed.*

14 *The great profit*

hereby, because they do neuer think and meditate vppon these mysteries of our Christian faith, or if they thinke vpon them, they passe them ouer very lightly, and in great hast,) they cause not in them this manner of motion and alteration, to wit, of ioy or of feare.

Wherefore it behooueth vs sometimes to opene this letter of our faith, I meane the mysteries thereof, and to reade the same very leisurely; and to consider with good attention, what things are taught vs in the same; the which is done by meanes of the exercise of Consideration. For it is Consideration that openeth that which is locked, and vnfoldeth that which is folded together, & maketh that cleare vnto vs, which is otherwise darke and obscure. And so by illuminating our vnderstanding with the greatnesse of the mysteries of our Faith, it inclineth our Will, (so farre forth as appertaineth to the office of consideration) to conforme our life to the same.

This office of Consideration, Almighty God figured very notably in the Law, when among the conditions

*of Consideration.*

15

ons that were required in the cleane *what was* Beast, he assigned this for one, that *signified by* the beast should chew the cudde, to *the cleane* wit, the meate that it had eaten be- *beast in the* fore. Now it is certaine, that it was lit- *Lawe.* tle to the purpose, whether the beast *Leuit. 11. 3* were cleane or vncleane, and surely *Deut. 14. 4* Almighty God made little account of that; but his meaning was, to represent vnto vs in that cleane beast, the condition, office, and exercise of those beastes, that bee spirituallie cleane, (to wit, of the iust and righteous persons) that are not content only to eat such things as appertain vnto Almighty God, in beleeuing them by fayth, but after they haue eaten them, they do also chew them by means of Consideration, in searching and pondering the mysteries which they belieue.

And after they haue vnderstoode the meaning & excellency of them, they distribute and diuide this meat vnto all the spirituall members of the soule, for the sustentation and repairing of the same.

*A notable*  
*similitude.*  
Insomuch, that if wee marke this matter well, we shall finde, that it fa-  
reth in this case as in the seede of a  
tree,

## 16 *The great profit*

tree, which although it do virtually containe within it the substance of the tree, yet hath it need of the vertue and influence of heauen, and of the benefite and moysture of the earth, to cause the vertue, that is inclosed in the seed, to come forth to light, & to growe vp by little and little, and waxe a tree.

Euen so in like manner wee say, that although faith be the first seed, and originall of all our weale, yet must it needes be holpen with this benefite of consideration, that by the same, and by meanes of Charitie, the greene and fruitfull tree of life (which is virtuallie contained therein,) may growe and come to light.

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*Howe Consideration helpeth hope.*

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### §. II.

**C**onsideration helpeth also no lesse the vertue of hope. This Hope is an affection of our Will, that hath his motiue and roote in the vnderstanding. As the Apostle S. Paule

## *of Consideration.* 17

S. Paule in his Epistle to the Romanes signifieth plainly vnto vs, saying; *All things that are written, are written for our learning: that wee through patience and consolation, which the Scripture teacheth vnto vs, might haue hope and assiance in almighty God.* Rom. 15.4

For vndoubtedly the holy Scripture is the fountaine, from whence the iust man gathereth the water of comfort, wherewith hee strengtheneth himselfe to put his hope and trust in God. *The holy Scripture is the fountaine of comfort.*

For first of all he seeth in the holy Scriptures, the greatnes of the workes and merites of our Saviour Iesus Christ, which are the principall stay and foundation of our Hope. There he seeth likewise in a thousand places, the greatnesse of the goodnesse, sweetnesse, and maiestie of Almighty God, liuely expressed and set out to the eye; and withall, the mercifull louing prouidence hee hath ouer them that be his; the gentlenesse and benignitie wherewith hee receiueth them that come vnto him, and the faithfull promises and pledges hee hath giuen vnto them, whereby they are very well assured, that he wil neuer forsake them that

*The workes and merites of our Saviour Christ, are the principall stay and foundation of our hope in God.*

that repose their hope and trust in him. There he seeth, that there is no one thing more oftē repeated in the Psalmes, more commonly promised in the Prophets, more evidently declared in the histories from the beginning of the world, then the louing fauours, graces and benefites, that the Lord continually bestoweth vpon such as bee his seruants, and how he hath most mercifully holpen and defended them in all their calamities and distresses. How he helped Abraham in al his iourneyes; Iacob in his dangers; Ioseph in his banishment; Dauid in his persecutions; Iob in his aduersities; Tobias in his blindnesse; Iudeth in her enterprise; Hester in her petition; The Noble Machabees in their battles and triumphes; and to be short, as many as with humble and religious hearts committed themselues vnto him.

These and other like examples doe strengthen and encourage our hearts in labours and aduersities, and cause it to hope and trust assuredly in God. Now what doth Consideration worke in all this? Forsooth it taketh this medicine into her hands, & applyeth

plyeth it to the weake and diseased member that hath neede of it; I meane heereby, that Consideration bringeth al these things into our remembrance, & representeth them to our hart; it searcheth and weigheth the greatnesse of these louing pledges and mercies of Almighty God, and with them, animateth & encourageth the afflicted person, that he be not dismaied, but rather fortifieth him with a strong Hope, & induceth him also to put his trust in that most mercifull and louing Lord, who neuer failed any one mā, that had recourse vnto him with all his heart.

By this therefore thou seest decree Christian Reader, how Consideration is the minister and seruant of Hope, and how it serueth her, and representeth vnto her al such things as may strengthen and encourage her. But that man that considereth not any of these things, and hath no eyes to see any part of them, wherewith can he possibly strengthen, and fortifie this vertue of Hope in himselfe, that it may be profitable vnto him in his labours, and aduersities?

*Howe*

*The fruit of  
Consideration.*



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How Consideration helpeth  
Charitie.

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## §. III.

Charitie of  
al vertues is  
the most ex-  
cellent.

1. Cor. 13.  
2. 13.

Ro. 13. 10.  
Mat. 11. 30.

According to  
the measure  
of our loue,  
we shall be  
rewarded of  
God.

1. Cor. 13. 2

After Hope, followeth Charitie, whose due praises cannot be uttered in few words. For Charitie is the most excellent vertue of all vertues, as well Theologicall, as Cardinall. Charitie is the life and soule of them all; and Charitie is also the accomplishment of all the Law. For as the Apostle saith; *Hee that loueth, (that is, he that is in perfect charity) hath fulfilled the Lawe.* This is the vertue that maketh the yoke of God sweet, and his burthen light. This is the measure, whereby the portion of glorie that shall be given vnto vs in the life to come must be measured. This is that vertue that is liking and acceptable vnto almighty God, and for whose sake, all such thinges are very acceptable vnto him: as be indeede acceptable vnto him. For truelie without Charitie, neither Faith, nor Prophecie, nor martyrdom, be of any value in the sight of God,

## of Consideration.

God. To conclude, Charitie is the fountaine and original of all other vertues, by reason of the preheminencie and foueraigntie it hath to commaund them, and to make them to doe their offices; as the same Apostle confirmeth, saying; *Charitie is patient and benigne: Charitie is not enuious; it doth no hurt to any man, it is not proud nor ambitious, neither doth it seeke her owne commoditie: Charitie is not angrie, it thinketh no euill, it reioyceth not at wickdnesse, and it is verie glad of the truth: Charitie suffereth al things, it beleeueth al things, trusteth al things, & beareth al things.*

1. Cor. 13. 4

Now although it be true, that all vertues and good workes, doe helpe vs towards the obtaining of this most excellent and precious Iewell; yet of all others, Consideration helpeth vs most speciallie. For certaine it is, that our will is a blinde power, that cannot step one foote, vnlesse the vnderstanding doe goe before, and illuminate and teach it, what thing it ought to desire, and withall how much it ought to wil and desire the same.

Our wil is a  
blind power,  
and must be  
guided by  
our vnder-  
standing.

It is also certaine, (as Aristotle affirmeth,

22 *The great profit*

meth) that each good thing is amiable in it selfe, & that euery thing dooth naturally loue his owne proper weale.

*How we be prouoked to loue God, both in regard of his diuine perfections, and of his great loue towards vs.*

**T**O the intent therefore that our Will may be inclined to loue Almighty God, it is requisite, that the Vnderstanding doe goe before it, to examine and trie, & so consequently, to declare vnto the Will, how amiable almighty God is, both in respect of himselfe, (to wit, in regard of his diuine perfections,) as also in respect of vs, (to wit, in regarde of his wonderfull loue and mercies shewed towards vs;) that is, the vnderstanding must weigh the greatness and excellencie of his bountie and goodnesse, of his benignity, of his mercie, of his beautie, of his sweetnes, of his meekenes, of his liberality, of his noblenesse, and of all other his perfections, which are innumerable.

Besides this, the vnderstanding hath

*of Consideration* 23

hath to consider, how louing and merciful Almighty God hath bene towards vs; how much hee hath loved vs; how much he hath done and suffered for our sakes, euen from the maunger, vntill his verie death upon the Crosse; how many great blessings and benefites he hath prepared for vs for the time to come; how many he doth presently bestow vpon vs; from how many great evils and miseries hee hath deliuered vs; with how great patience hee hath suffered vs; and how gently and louingly he hath dealt with vs; with all his other benefits, which bee also innumerable.

And thus by considering and pondering very much in the consideration of these things, our heart shall by little and little bee enkindled and enflamed in the loue of such a merciful and bountifull louing Lord. For if the verie wild and sauage beastes, doe loue their wel-willers and benefactors, and if gifts (as it is commonly said) doe breake the hard and stonie Rockes; and if that man that findeth benefites, findeth withall (as the Philosopher saith) *Chaines where*



24 *The great profit*

whereby to take and bind mens hearts  
what hart is there then so stony hard  
and sauage, that considering the pa-  
sing bountifull goodnesse and great-  
nesse of all these inestimable bene-  
fites, is not enkindled and enflamed  
in the loue of our most merciful and  
louing Lord, that hath bestowed  
them vpon vs?

*How Almighty God will helpe him, that  
helpeth himselfe.*

**A**Dde also hereunto, that when  
a man considereth these things  
attentiuely with himselfe, and ende-  
uoreth with the grace of God to doe  
so much as hee is able to doe for his  
part, Almighty God will then also  
do that, that appertaineth vnto him  
that is, Almighty God will moue  
him, that moueth himselfe, and helpe  
him that helpeth himselfe: by hel-  
ping our consideration with the light  
of the holy Ghost, and with the gift  
of vnderstanding; the which the  
more it penetrateth & vnderstandeth  
all these reasons that induce vs to the  
loue of God, the more dooth it en-  
kindle and enflame vs in the same  
loue

*of Consideration.*

25

loue of him.

For like as that euerlasting light  
and word of the Father, is not a bar-  
ren word, but a fruitfull word, which  
together with the father, produceth  
the holy Ghost, which is a loue con-  
substantiall: euen so dooth this light  
& word of God worke in our harts,  
by enkindling and inspiring this  
loue of God in them.

*How vehement acts of Charitie,  
are a meane to encrease  
Charitie.*

**T**His may yet be confirmed & de-  
clared more plainly by another  
reason. For it is manifest, that al-  
though this vertue of Charitie doe  
grow and increase (as we haue said)  
with the actes of all other vertues, be-  
ing done in the state of grace: yet  
dooth it chiefly increase with her  
owne proper actes, when such actes be  
vehement.

For like as by writing well, and  
with an earnest care and diligence, a  
man attaineth to bee a good writer;  
by painting, a Painter; and by the  
exercise of singing, a Musitian: e-

B b

uen

*The vse, exercise, and continuance of louing much Almighty God, maketh a man become a great lover of God.*

euen so likewise by louing, hee may become a Louer, I meane heereby, that like as the vse of writing well, causeth a man to bee a good writer; and of painting well, a good Painter, &c. euen so likewise the vse, exercise, and continuance of louing much almightie God, maketh a man at length to become a great louer of God. For albeit this heavenly habitie and vertue, be the gift of God, and a thing which he infuseth, poureth and worketh in our soules, yet neuerthelesse hee worketh this by this meane. I meane hereby, that as well the vertues infused into our soules by Almighty God, as the vertues acquiste, (to wit, the vertues that bee obtained by our owne labour and industrie) do both of them grow and increase with the exercise of their owne actes, although in a different manner.

Whereupon we may inferre thus much, that the more a man shal multiply the acts of the loue of God, & the more he shal exercise himself in this vertue of Charitie, and the longer he shall endure and perseuere in this worke of loue, the more shall  
this

this heavenly gift of charity be rooted and fortified in him. But nowe how can this bee doone without the exercise of Cōsideration? Howe can the wil be occupied in louing of almighty God, valesse the vnderstanding be exercised in blowing, enkindling, & discovering vnto it, the causes of the loue of God?

For like as when two horses draw in a Chariot, the one cannot go forwardes without the other: euen so these two powers, to wit, the Will and Vnderstanding, bee in such sort linked together, that ordinarilie one cannot goe forwardes without the other; (at the least, the Will cannot mooue without the Vnderstanding.) Thou seest nowe good Christian reader, howe inwardly and entirely the exercise of Consideration is annexed to the loue of God. For so much as a man can neuer (or very hardly) set himself to loue, valesse he doe also consider, or haue before cōsidered, such things as may moue him vnto this loue.

Besides, it is very needfull for vs, to vse some exercise of Consideration, not onelie for the increasing of  
this

this vertue of Charity, but also for the preseruatiō of the same, that is to say, Consideration is necessarie, not only that Charity may increase, but also that it it may not faile & decrease, among so many contradictions and stumbling blocks, as it hath in this fraile and miserable life. We see that a fish beeing out of the water dieth forthwith: and a drop of water, being out of the Sea, is quickly dried vp: and the fire beeing out of his natural region, is incontinently consumed, vnlesse there be some care and diligence vsed to feede and maintaine it, by putting oftentimes wood vnto it, wherewith to preserue it. Now the very like neede hath the fire of Charitie also to preserue it in this life, where it is as it were a stranger & pilgrime. And the wood wherewith it must bee preserued, is the Consideration of the benefits of Almighty God, and of his perfections. For each one of these things being well considered, is as it were a fagot, or a firebrande, that enkindleth and enflameth this fire of the loue of God in our hartes.

Wherefore it behoueth vs, to nourish

*Charity is as it were a stranger in this transitory life.*

rish and maintaine this fire of Charitie, oftentimes with the woode of Consideratiō, that this diuine flame may neuer faile in vs. According as Almighty God hath signified in the Lawe, when he said, *Vpon my Altar* (which is the heart of the iust man) *Leuit. 6. 12* *there shall be alwaies fire.* And therefore let good diligence and care bee taken euery day in the morning, to maintaine this fire of Charitie with wood, (to wit, with the Consideration of all these things) that by this meane it may be alwaies preserued. And so is it sayde in the Psalme: *Through my meditation, there is enkindled a fire, to wit, the fire of charity.*

*That all vertues may be lost by discontinuance, and want of vse and exercise of them.*

**T**HIS necessitie of Consideration may bee proued by another reason also. For we see by experience in all abilities and graces, both such as are naturall, as those also that are acquisite (I meane, gotten by our owne rauaile and industrie,) that like as

they increase by vse and exercise: euen so are they also forgotten, if we leaue to exercise them.

And this wee see plainly verified euen in such things as be very naturall, and customably vsed. For what thing is more vsuall then the tongue and language, which a man is enured and acquainted withall, euen from his Mothers pappes, and yet may it be forgotten in time, if it bee not vsed and exercised? But what speake I of the tongue; seeing it happeneth some times, that when a man hath been sick in his bed, but onely foure or fife monthes, he can scarcely afterwards frame himselfe to goe againe when he riseth, notwithstanding that going is a thing so natural and so accustomably vsed. Nowe, if the abilities which be so natural and so much exercised, doe so much decay when they be not vsed, what will the supernaturall abilities do, which are but as it were certaine props and staies adioyned vnto vs, to supplie the defects of nature? And if Charitie with all other vertues infused, be in like manner to be reckened in this account, in what case then shall

we

we be, if wee doe but verie seldome or neuer exercise our selus in them? For if that thing that is euen naturall, will be lost for want of exercise, how much more will that bee lost that is supernaturall? And if that thing may be lost that is fast racted euen in our verie bowels, what shall that doe, that is but as it were onely fastened vnto vs with little pinnes? Again, if it bee true that all amitie and friendship is both preserved and increased, by meanes of familiaritie and communication: and by the want therof is vtterly quenched and lost, (according as Aristotle affirmeth,) what shall then become of those persons, that haue no manner of communication with Almighty God at all? And what can we hope of them that do neuer speak with him, nor hee with them, nor so much as think, consider, or treat of any heauenly matter?

Thou seeest then (deare Christian Brother) of how great importancie the exercise of Consideration, and communication with almighty God is vnto vs, for the preservation of this vertue of Charitie.

B b 4

How

## Howe Consideration hel- peth Deuotion, and all other vertues affectiue.

### S. IIII.

**T**He helpe of Consideration is no lesse behouuefull to be had for al such vertues as are called affectiue: that is, appertaining to the affection, whereof we haue made mention before. Among which vertues, one of the most principall is, Deuotion: which is a certaine heauenly abilitie and gift, that enclineth our Will to desire all such things with great affection and earnestnes, as appertaine to the seruice of Almighty G O D, which is one of the things that man hath most need of, in this state of nature corrupted. For wee see by experience, that men doe sinne, not so much for want of vnderstanding, as for want of will: I meane heereby, that they sin not so much for want of knowledge what is good, as for that they are vnwilling to doe the thing, that they know to bee good.

And

And this vnwillingnes proceedeth not of the nature of vertue, ( which of it selfe is most sweete, delectable, and very agreeable to the nature of man, ) but of the corruption of man.

Now, considering that this defect of our Will, is the very chiefe and principall impediment wee haue to hinder vs from vertue and goodnes, our principall care must be, to seeke a remedy for the curing of this defect; for which purpose, one of the things that helpeth vs most, is Deuotion.

*Our owne wil is the principall impediment that hindereth vs from vertue.*

For Deuotion is none other thing but a heauenly refreshing, & a blast or inspiration of the holy ghost, that breaketh and maketh his waie thorough all these difficulties, shaketh off this heauinesse, cureth this lothsomnes of our Will, and causeth vs to haue a taste and saueur in that thing, that was otherwise vnsauorie, and therby maketh vs very prompt, agile, and quicke vnto al goodnesse. And this wonderful effect of Deuotion, the seruants of God doe dailie try, & perceiue by experience in the selues, at what time they haue some great and singular Deuotion. For

*The wonderful effect that deuotiō worketh in a mā*

B b 5

then

*What Deuotion is.*

then they find themselves more willing and lustie vnto all labour and paines, then they bee at other times. And then it seemeth, that the youth of their soules reioyceth, and is renewed; and then they trie by experience in themselves, the truth of those words of the Prophet, where he saith,

*Psal. 103. 5 They that trust in the Lord, shall renew  
Esay. 40. 31 their strength: they shall take wings, as it  
were of an Eagle, they shall run and not  
be weary: they shall go and not faint.*

*That Devotion is a continuall  
spring of good and holy  
desires.*

**D**evotion hath also another property, which is, to be as it were a certaine fountaine, and perpetuall spring of good and holy desires. For which cause in the holy scriptures, *Cant. 1. & 4* it is commonly called an oyntment, which is compounded of many sundry sorts of odoriferous spices, and thereby yeeldeth out from it manie sweete odours. Now the very like operation hath devotion also, for the time it indureth in our hearts, for so much

much as it wholly spreadeth it selfe abroad into a thousand sundry kinds of holy purposes and desires, the which the more they increase and are dilated, the more doth the stench of our appetite decrease and diminish, which are the euill desires that proceede from the same. For like as the euill saour in a sick mans Chamber, is not so much perceiued when there is a little Frankincence, or some other odoriferous thing burnt therein: euen so the saour of our euill desires is not so much perceiued, so long as the most sweete saour of this precious oyntment continueth within vs.

And for so much as it is certaine, that all the corruption of our life, commeth of the corruption & stench of our appetite, and of the euill desires that proceede from the same, it shall bee our part therefore, to vse great diligence in procuring this heauenly oyntment of deuotion, which is of verie great force and efficacie, to diminish and consume this pestilent corruption.

And in like manner, as Consideration serueth in all the premisses, euen

euē so doth it also serue and further all the other vertues before mentioned, which are, *The feare of GOD: The sorrow for our sinnes: The contempt of our selues*; wherein consisteth the vertue of *Humilitie*, and *Thanksgiuing vnto Almighty GOD for his benefits*.

For (as we haue said before) there can be no good affection in the will, vnlesse it proceede of some consideration of the vnderstanding. For how can a man haue sorrow & contrition for his sinnes, but by considering the filthinesse and multitude of them? The losse wee receiue by them? The hatred Almighty God conceiueth against them? And withall, how polluted the soule of man remaineth by reason of them.

Againe, how can a man stirre vp his heart vnto the feare of God, but by considering the highnesse of his maiestie, the greatnesse of his iustice, the profoundnes of his iudgements, the multitude of his owne sinnes, with other the like things? How can a man humble and despise himselfe with all his heart, vnlesse he consider the great number of his owne frailties,

ties, infirmities, falles, and miseries? For if Humilitie bee (as S. Bernard affirmeth) the contempt of our selues, *S. Bernard.* which proceedeth of the knowledge of our selues, it is manifest, that the deeper a man shall wade by meanes of Consideration into this knowledge of himselfe, and the more hee shall digge into this dunghill, the better and more truely shall hee vnderstand what he is of himselfe, and the more shall he contemne & humble himselfe.

Now to speake of thanksgiuing vnto Almighty God for his manifold inestimable benefites, out of which doe proceede those songs and praises of God (which is a principall part of true Religion,) from whence (I say) doth this rendering of thanks proceede, but from the profound consideration of the same benefites? For the more a man shall by meanes of Consideration penetrate, and vnderstand the greatnes and excellencie of Gods benefites, the more is he prouoked to praise, and giue thanks vnto Almighty GOD, with all his heart for the same.

I doe heere also passe ouer the  
contempt

contempt of the world, and the hatred of sin, with other the like vertuous affections, which next after Grace, doe proceede of this exercise of Consideration, which is the spurre and prouoker of them all, & the oyle wherewith the Lampe of all these vertues and good affections, and of other the like graces, are still nourished and maintained.

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**Howe praier ioyned with  
Consideration, helpeth al the ver-  
tuous affections.**

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S. V.

**P**Rayer likewise when it is ioyned with Consideration (as ordinarily it is wont to bee) helpeth no lesse then Consideration it selfe: yea, sometimes it helpeth much more. For Consideration commonly is not occupied any further, but onely about enkindling of some one of the vertuous affections; but Prayer when it is attent and deuout, and is withall accompanied with Spirite and feruencie of minde, is wont

to

to stirre vp all these vertues aforesayde. For when the soule presenteth herselfe before Almighty God, with an earnest great desire to appease his wrath, and to desire him of mercie, then there is no stone so harde, but that it is moued heereunto.

I meane hereby, that there is no holy affection, but that it is the whole exercised and employed to this purpose. And it fareth in this case as it doth with a Mother, that is desirous to still her child, or as it doth with a good and louing wife, that hath a desire to pacifie her husband when shee perceiueth him to be angry, in which cases, they are wont to omit no means they can deuise, that may any wise further the matter.

*The offices and effects of  
Prayer.*

**I**N the exercise of praier, the religious soule accuseth her selfe before almighty God; there with the Publican shee is confounded; and ashamed for her sinnes and offences: there she purposeth an amendement

of



of life; there she humbleth her selfe, and treiblet before the supream diuine Maiesty. There she belieueth; there she hopeth; there she loueth; there she adareth; there she prayseth; there she giueth thanks for all benefits; and there she offereth sacrifice vnto almighty God, both for her selfe, and for al her neighbours. All these things be performed in a deuout prayer.

And because the habites of vertues doe increase with the exercise of their acts, heereof it proceedeth, that the soule by meanes of this exercise of prayer, remaineth verie much beautified, and perfitted in these vertues, as Laurentius Iustinianus affirmeth in these wordes: *In true and earnest praier, the soule is cleansed from sin: Charitie is nourished: Faith is illuminated: Hope is strengthened: the Spirit is comforted: the bowels are mollified: the heart is quieted: trueth is discovered: temptation is ouercome: heauines is put to flight: the senses are reuiued: the strength that was weakened, is repaired: luke-warmnes is abandoned: the rustines of vices is consumed: & in this exercise the*

*liuely*

*liuely sparkles of heavenly desires doe rise, and shewe themselves, among which burneth the flame of the loue of God.*

By this we vnderstand, that praier is a most conuenient exercise, for that man that mindeth to reforme his manners and life, and to change himselfe into another man; as our Sauour hath plainly signified vnto vs, in the mysterie of his glorious transfiguration, wherof S. Luke writeth thus; *That as he was praying in the Mount, hee suddainly transfigured himselfe in such wise, that his face shined very bright, like the sunne, and his garments became white, like snow.* Luke. 9. 28.

*Why our Sauour woulde transfigure himselfe rather at the time of prayer, then at any other time.*

**O**UR Sauour coulde rightwell haue transfigured himselfe at other times then at prayer, if it had pleased him; but hee would of verie purpose be transfigured whiles hee was at prayer, to signifie vnto vs in the transfiguration of his body, what vertue praier hath to transfigure our soules.

## 42 Of Prayer ioyned

*Praier hath great vertue to transfigure our soules:* soules: that is, to make them to lose the customes of the old man, and to clothe them with the newe man, which is created after the Image of God. Ther it is, wher the vnderstanding is illuminated with the beames of the true Sonne of Iustice, & wher the garments and ornaments of the soule are renued, and become whiter then snow. This is the very thing, that Almighty God signified to holy Iob, when he said.

Iob. 39:29.

*What? Is it by thy wisdom that the Hauke pruneth and chaungeth her feathers, when shee beateth her wings against the South?* Certainly, it is a thing greatly to bee wondered at, that this Birde knoweth how to cast off her old feathers, and how to feather her selfe with new. And that for this purpose, shee seeketh the hot ayre of the South, that with the heat thereof her pores may be opened, & with her moouing, the old feathers fall off, and so giue place to the new that beginne to spring out. But how much more wonderfull is it, to see a soule vnclithe her selfe of Adam, and to put on Christ? To chaunge the condicions of the old man, and

## with Consideration 43

to adorne her selfe with the condicions of the newe man? Newe this change that is so wonderfull, is then wrought, when the deuout soule turneth himselfe to the South, and there beateth her wings in the ayre. And what is it to turne her selfe to the South, but to lift vp her spirit to the consideration of the eternall light, & to the beames of the true Sonne of Iustice?

And what is it to beate the wings in the ayre, but to bee there sighing and panting with heauenly affections and desires, calling vpon Almighty God with great anguish of mind, and desiring most humbly his fauour and grace? For then bloweth the ayre of the South, that is, the heauenlie refreshing of the holie Ghost, who with his temperate heat and sweet mouing, strengtheneth & helpeth vs, to cast off all the old feathers of the old Adam, that they may giue place to the newe feathers of vertues & holy desires, which there doe beginne to growe and bud out. And this is that thing that Ecclesiasticus signified by other wordes, when he said: *They that feare the Lord,*

Ecclus 2:18

will

44 of Prayer ioyned.

will prepare their hearts, & sanctifie the  
soules before him.

The which is principally done in  
the exercise of deuoute prayer: For  
there it is, where the soule presenteth  
her selfe most familiarly before Al-  
mightie God, (as S. Bernard saith)  
And there it is, whereby approaching  
neere vnto the euerlasting light, she  
seeth more cleerely her own defects,  
and so bewaileth & accuseth them,  
and seeketh remedy for them, desir-  
ing the Lord of his grace, and fall-  
purposing an amendement on her  
part; and thus by little and little, she  
sanctifieth and amendeth her life.  
Thou seest now good Christian reader,  
what a great helpe this exercise  
of Consideration is, towards the ob-  
taining of those most high and ex-  
cellent vertues, which are (as we haue  
said) peculiar to a Christian man.

How

besides, it directeth our workes, it correcteth our  
faults, it frameth our mannes, it beauti-  
feth and directeth our life: to be short, it  
giueth knowledge to a man, of thinges  
both diuine and humaine.

It is Consideration that distinguisheth

with Consideration 45

lowe consideration hel-  
peth towardes the obtayning of  
the foure Cardinall vertues: which be,  
Prudence, Iustice, Fortitude, and  
Temperance.

§. VI.

Besides, Consideration helpeth  
also (after a sort) towardes the  
obtaining of the other foure ver-  
tues, called Cardinal vertues: which  
be Prudence, Iustice, Fortitude, and  
Temperance, as Saint Bernard  
plainely affirmeth in his Booke of  
Consideration, by these words: First  
of all (saith he) Consideration purifieth  
& cleanseth the very fountain from whence  
it proceedeth: which is the soule. Besides  
that, it governeth our natural passions, it

The wonder-  
ful effects of  
consideration

sheth things confounded, it recollecteth those that be scatered abroad, it searcheth secrets, it seeketh for truthes, and tryeth and examineth such things as are indeed but apparant & counterfeit. It is Consideration that disposeth for the time to come & thinketh of the time past, prouiding for the one, & bewailing the others, that nothing may remaine without correction and due chastisement. It is Consideration that in the midst of prosperity foreseeeth aduersitie, and therefore is not dismayed when it commeth: for that it hath prouident the same before hand with consideration. Of which two things, the one appertaineth to Prudence, the other to Fortitude.

It is Consideration that sitteth down as a Iudge, to giue sentence between pleasure and necessity, & appointeth to euery of them their bounds and lymits: giuing to necessity that which is sufficient, and taking from pleasure that which is superfluous, and in so dooning, it maketh & formeth the vertue of Temperance whereunto this office appertaineth.

Thus farre be the wordes of Saint Bernard, whereby thou maiest perceiue, howe great & general a help

Consideration is, towards the obtaining of these vertues.

### Howe Consideration helpeth to resist vices.

#### S. VII.

Consideration dooth not onely helpe to obtaine vertues, but also to resist the vices that be contrary vnto them. For what kind of temptation is there, against which a man doth not fight, with the weapons of prayer and Consideration? For although it bee most necessarie to vse other weapons for this purpose, as fasting, almes deedes, affliction of the bodie, and keeping it vnder, and to eschewe the occasions of euilles, with other like things: yet at a sudden, what other weapon can be deuised more readie, and as it were, euier at hand, then prayer and Consideration? With what other weapons dooth the iust man fight, and ouercome in these battailes, them with them?

Consideration If hee be assaulted with the cogitation

**48 How Consideration helpeth**

tation of carnal pleasure and delight hee hideth himselfe wholly in the holes of the Rocke, that is, in the precious woundes of our Sauour Christ crucified. If he bee assauleth with anger and desire of reuenge, he thinketh vpon the wonderfull patience and meekenesse of our Sauour Christ, and vpon those sweete wordes he spake, when he desired pardon of the Crosse for those very persons that crucified him.

If hee be inticed with gluttonie & delicious fare; if he bee allured with the desire to lie in a soft bed, and to leade a delicate and wanton life, he lifteth vp his eyes, and considereth the bitter gaule and vinegar, which that fountaine of life, our sweete Sauour Christ, dranke vpon the crosse and also the hard bed of the Crosse whereupon hee died: and the painefull and austere trouble-some life which hee led for our sakes. When he beginneth to bee puffed vp with pride, he considereth the greatnesse of our Sauour Christs humilitie. When he is moued with couetousnesse, he considereth the extremity of the povertie of our Sauour Christ. When

sleep

**to resist vices.**

**49**

sleep and slothfulnesse maketh him to become heauie and dull, he considereth the painefull watchings and trauailes, that our Sauour endured for vs in his praiers.

When he is wearied with the troublesome labours and paines of this present life, he considereth the greatnesse of the heavenly treasures, and glorious delights which he shall receiue in the life to come. When he is tempted with the fickle pleasures & delights of this miserable worlde, he considereth the euerlastingnes and bitterness of the horrible paines and torments of hel fire.

When hee is molested and wearied with the crosse, he thinketh vpon the vertuous examples of the Martyres, of the Apostles, and of the Prophets, and with the consideration of that which is past, he causeth al that he dooth presently, to seeme little vnto him. And when it so hapneth, that with all these defesiues he cannot well sustaine the weight of his burthen, he addeth the diligence of Consideration, the voice of Praier, calling and crying with great anguish of minde vpon Al-

C c

mightie

## 50 How Consideration, &c.

mighty God, who (bee you well assured) will neuer forsake them that call vppon him, but promisseth that hee will giue eare vnto them; and hath giuen vs very manifest and sundry examples, that he neuer forsooke them that called vppon him with all their hearts.

This is that, which the holy Prophet King Dauid affirmeth in many places he did, when he saw himselfe compassed about with the snares of his enemies, and with tribulations and afflictions, saying; *I Cried vnto the Lord with my voyce: with my voice I praised vnto the Lord. I poured out my meditation before him, and declared mine affliction in his presence.*

**Howe Consideration excludeth not other particular helps vnto vertues.**

### §. VIII.

**H**owbeit, let no man for all this imagine, that hereby is excluded the particular labor and study, that

## Of Consideration.

51 is to bee vsed about euerie one of the other vertues, for that Consideration is so great a helpe to obtaine them. For so much as generall helps do not exclude the particular helps that be required in euery thing. And the general helps required towards the obtaining of all vertues, are not onely Consideration, but also Fast- ing, Prayer, hearing of the Word, receiuing the Sacrament of the bodie and bloud of Christ, with other the like vertues, which bee generall helps and prouocations vnto al vertues. But besides these generall helps that doe giue light to the vnderstanding, and moue the will to goodnes, it is very requisite also to vse the proper exercises of the same vertues, whereby to roote, and make the habites of them more perfect by vse, and to cause a man to haue a more promptnes and facilitie, in the exercise of good workes. For otherwise, like as the sword that neuer cometh out of the scabberd, is commonly verie hard to bee drawne out, at the time that a man hath need to occupie it: euen so whosoever dooth neuer exercise himselfe in the actes of

*Note the generall helps vnto all vertues.*

52 *Of Consideration.*

vertues, shall neuer bee prompt or quicke in doing them, when he shall haue need to vse them.

And although Charitie bee the greatest, and most generall helpe we haue vnto all vertues, yet Consideration is, as it were, the generall instrument of Charitie, whereby to attaine vnto all goodnesse, as we haue here declared. And therefore, like as the soule is the first beginning of all the workes of man, and yet it vseth naturall heate, as a generall instrument vnto all such things as it doth: even so is Charitie the beginning of all our good workes, and yet Charitie vseth Consideration and Deuotion, as general instruments to bring them to passe.

So that it is no derogation to charitie, to giue this preheminance vnto these vertues: for so much as this preheminance belongeth vnto Charitie, as to the Mistris and principall agent: but to Consideration and Deuotion, as to her instrumentes and helpers.

*Charitie is the beginning of all our good workes.*

53

**How the exercises of Prayer, Consideration, and Meditation, &c. appertaine not onely to Clergie persons, (though principally vnto them,) but vnto the Laitie also.**

S. IX.

**B**UT peraduenture thou wilt say, that these exercises of Prayer, Consideration, and Meditation, do appertaine onely vnto Clergie persons, and not to the Laitie. True it is I graunt, that these exercises doe principally appertaine vnto Clergie persons, by reason of their state and profession of life: but yet neuertheless, the Laitie are not excused of vsing the exercise of Prayer, if they mind continually to preferue themselves, & to liue in the feare of God, without committing any deadly sin. For the Laitie are bound to haue Faith, Hope, Charitie, Humilitie, the feare of God, Contrition, Deuotion, and an hatred against sinne.

*What Laymen are bound to haue.*

Now seeing all these vertues bee for the most part vertues affectiue,

#### 54 How praier appertaineth

(as we haue already declared) which affections most necessarily proceede of some consideration of the. Vnderstanding, if this consideration be not exercised, how shall these vertues be preserved? How shall a man helpe himselfe by Faith, if he do not sometimes consider such thinges as his faith telleth him? How shall he be enkindled in Charitie, and strengthened in Hope? How shall hee bridle himselfe with the feare of God? How shall he be moued to Deuotion, to sorrow for his sinnes, and to the contempt of himselfe, (wherin consisteth the vertue of Humilitie, which appertaineth vnto all kind of persons) if hee doe not consider those things, wherewith these affections are wont to be enkindled, according as wee haue before declared?

Neither ought a man to passe ouer these things in the exercise of Consideration, with too much speed & in post haste. For among the miseries of mans heart one of the greatest is, that it is so sensible to vnderstand the things of the world, and so vn sensible to vnderstand the things appertaining vnto Almighty God.

Insomuch

#### unto the Laitie.

55

Insomuch that vnto the one, it is as it were a very dry reed: and to the other, as it were greene wood, that cannot be sette on fire and enkindled, but with verie great labour and trauaile.

Wherefore we must not in our exercise of Consideration, passe ouer these things in such haste, but stay, & pause for a time in them, more or lesse, according as the holy Ghost shall instruct vs; and according also, as the businesse and occupations of euery man in his state & vocation of life shall giue him leaue. And it is not a matter of meere necessity, to haue certain times appointed euery day for Consideration.

Vnto these things yee may adde furthermore, the daungers of the world, with all the great difficulties men haue, to preterue themselves without deadly sinne, in a body so euill disposed, & in a world so dangerous, and among so many enemies, as we haue continually assaunting vs on euerie side. And therefore, if, for that thou art no Clergie man, thy state of life doe not binde thee vnto so much exercise of Praier and

C c 4 Medita-



36 *How praier appertaineth*

Meditation: yet the greatnes of the daunger, wherein thou liuest in the world, must needes binde thee to vse some exercise therein.

*Note why  
the Laity  
live in more  
danger of  
falling into  
deadly sinne  
then the  
Clergie.*

The state of a Clergie man, I confesse, is greater then thine, but thy danger of falling into deadly sinne, is also greater then his. For the Clergie man is protected and garded by his study, by obedience, by praier, by fastings, by saying daily diuine seruice, by the austeritie of his ministry, by good company & holie conuersation, and by all other spirituall exercises: but the Lay-man, liuing, practising, and dealing daily and hourly in the throng and presse of the world (besides that hee is destitute, & vnprouided of al these great helps & safegards) hee is compassed about on all sides, with dragons and scorpions, and treadeth alwaies vpon Serpents & Basilisks. I meane, the daungerous conuersation with wicked persons, and the continuall occasions & temptations of falling into deadly sinne, both at home and abroad, within himselfe, and without himselfe, both at doores and at windowes, and hath a thousande seuerall

*unto the Laity.*

37

uerall diuelish engines and snares, laid to entrap him at all times both day and night.

Among all which daungers and temptations, for him to keepe his hart pure, and his eyes chaste, and his body cleane, in the midst of the raging fires of youth, of naughtie companie, of lewde conuersation, and among so many euill examples of this wicked world, where there is scarcely heard one word of God; but rather iesting and scoffing at all such as be giuen to vertue and godlinesse, it is one of the greatest wonders that almighty God worketh in the world. Wherefore, if the Clergie man ought to be alwayes armed, because hee is by his profession a man of warre: euen so must the Lay-man be armed also, by reason of the great perill and daunger he liueth in. For as well do they goe armed, that haue enemies, as those that be souldiours, and men of warre.

The souldiours go armed by reason of the bond and dutie of their profession, and the others go armed by reason of their necessitie. Among which spirituall weapons, wee doe

C c 5 not

58 *How prayer appertaineth*

not onely place praier, Consideration, and Meditation; but also fasting, diligent hearing of the Word Preached, reading of deuoute Bookes, often receiuing of the holy Sacrament, auoyding euill companie, resisting the occasions of sinnes, with al other bringing vnder of our rebellious bodies.

All which thinges be, as it were a certaine brine and pickle, to keepe and preserue this corruptible and euill inclined fleshe of ours, that it breede not wormes and stench in it. For vndoubtedly, since the corruption of originall sin, it is the greatest and hardest matter of the world, for men to keepe themselves any long time without deadly sinne, liuing in such a corrupt and dissolute wicked world as this is. For if those verie persons, that doe vse all the spirituall helpes and exercises, are, all that notwithstanding, much molested with the feare, and danger of falling into deadly sinne; what shal become of those, that doe neuer vse any of all these spirituall exercises scarcely in all their life?

And if the holy King Dauid, and many

*unto the Laitie.*

59

many other saints (that liued so warily and vertuously, & went armed with so many kindes of spirituall weapons) did notwithstanding take such great falles, at what time the occasions of sinne were ministred vnto them, what shal become of them (trow yee) that make none account at all of any of these spiritual exercises?

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*An answer to an obiection, that some slothfull Christians doe make against the holy exercises of Prayer, Meditation & Consideration, saying, that they are bound to no more, but to keepe & obserue the Commandements of God, and of his Church.*

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§ X.

**B** V T thou wilt say, I am not bound to keepe any more then the Commandements of almighty God, & of his Church. True it is, I grant. But yet to keep wel this wall, we haue neede of a fore-wall or bulwarke; and to keepe this vessell, wee haue neede of a Cupbord to keepe it in; and to raise vp this building, wee

**60** *An obiection answered.*

we haue neede of a scaffold, and other engines to raise it vp withal. I meane hereby, that to keep the Law of God, wee haue neede of many things, to strengthen & encourage our harts, for the keeping & obseruation of the same law.

For if the nature of man were in so good plight as it was before sinne, then were it a verie easie matter to fulfill our duty heerein; but now (alas) hauing so many lets and contradictions, we haue neede to haue euer two cares, the one how to keep the Law of God; and the other how to strengthen our heart, that it may overcome the impediments and contradictions that doe hinder vs from fulfilling the Lawes and commandements of God.

**Nehc. 4.7.**

When the children of Israell returned from the Captiuitie of Babylon, they went about to build Ierusalem againe, and they intended to doe nothing else but only to build; but because the borderers round about them, sought to hinder them in their building, their labor & trouble was thereby doubled. So that they were constrained to appoint

*An obiection answered. 61*

the one part of the people to attend to the building, & the other to fight and driue away their enemies from the wall.

Now in our case, whereas there be so many enemies that doo daily and hourelly seeke to hinder vs in this spiritual building of vertues; the deuils on the one side, with a thousand subtile snares and deceits; the world on the other side, with a thousand kinds of scandalous offences & euill examples; and the flesh in the midst, with diuers & sundry kindes of appetites, which be so fiery and so contrarie to the law of God, (for God requireth chastitie, & the flesh longeth after sensuality; God requireth humility, and the flesh seeketh after vanity; God would haue austerity of life, & the flesh hunteth after delights & pleasures:) if now there be no spirituall weapons exercised to driue away these enemies; if there be no medicines vsed to cure this corrupted flesh, howe shall a man keepe chastity among so many dangers? charitie among so many scandalous offences; peace among so many contradictions; simplicitie among

62 *An obiection answered.*

mong so many malicious deceits: cleannes of life, in a body so filthie: and humilitie, in a worlde so much giuen vnto pompous pride and vaine glorie,

Now to cure this flesh, & to make resistance against these enemies, that doe hinder vs in this building of vertues, we haue need of other vertues. Some to carry the burthen, & some others to help vs to carry the same. For the vertue of chastity filleth the burthen of the commandement, which sayth; *Thou shalt not commit adulterie*: but fasting, prayer, auoyding of occasions of sinne, and other the like holy exercises, do help to mortifie the flesh, that it may bee the better able to beare this burthen. All which vertues, although they be not alwaies of precept & bounden duty, yet are they oftentimes of very necessitie, and bounden duty to be exercised, whensoever the danger wee bee in is so great, that it requireth the exercise of them, for the keeping and fulfilling of the commandements.

But among these vertues, and defenses (that do helpe vs to obserue the

*An obiection answered.* 63

the commaundements,) one of the most principall is prayer. For prayer is a principall meane to obtaine Grace, which is the thing that is of chiefest force, to sustaine the burthen of the Law of God. And therefore Ecclesiasticus saith, *He that keepeth the Law, multiplieth Prayer*. For wher as he seeth by experience, that none can keepe the Law of God (by the obseruation whereof euerlasting glorie is obtained) without the grace of God, he helpeth himselfe by prayer to obtaine Grace, by meanes whereof he may be able to keepe the Law of God.

The Law commaundeth vs to be chaste. But besides this, the holy Ghost addeth, and saith by the Wise man: *Vnderstanding that none could be chaste, vlesse thou (O Lord) diddest giue him grace for the same, and it was a great grace to know whose gift it was. I went vnto the Lord, and I demaunded of him this grace with all my hart.*

Whereby thou maiest see (according as wee declared in the beginning) that the Wall hath need of a fore-wall or bulwarke, and the Vessel

Eccl. 35.1.

Mat. 19.17

Sap 8.21.  
1. Co. 15.10  
Phil. 2.13.  
Phil 4.13.

*64 An obiection answered.*

sell hath need of a Cupbord to keepe it in ; and some vertues haue neede of other vertues to defend and guard one another.

Now if this bee true, that thou art bound to keepe the Law of God, and not to commit any deadly sinne, it is good reason, that thou doe'st seeke out all such meanes, as may helpe thee to keepe the same Lawe, and to preserve thee without deadly sinne.

The which meanes, although generally they bee but of counsell, yet sometimes they may bee of precept, when the necessitie of exercising the (as wee haue said) is so great, that without the vse of those meanes, the very commaundements themselues cannot bee kept and fulfilled, as all the learned Diuines doe affirme.

Howbeit euery Christian, that hath an earnest desire of his saluation, ought not to expect, and delay the seeking for these remedies, vntil the very last and extreme danger, when the knife is alreadie at his throte; but he ought to make good prouision, and to furnish himselfe before hand, by meanes of these foresaid spirituall exercises, that he may liue  
more

*of Consideration*

*65*

more safe and secure, from the perill of breaking Gods commaundements.

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*Of the matter of Consideration.*

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*§. XI.*

**H**Auing nowe spoken both of the profit and necessitie of Consideration, and our hearts beeing nowe well affected heerewith towards this vertue, let vs begin to treat of the matter of Consideration, which consisteth of certain godly and deuoute Considerations, which are of greatest force to induce vs to the loue & feare of God, to the abhorring of sinne, & contempt of the world. For which purpose there be no Considerations better, nor of greater force and efficacy, then those that are taken out of the principall Articles & mysteries of our faith; as the bitter passion and death of our Sauiour ;  
the

the remembraunce of the terrible day of Iudgement: of the horrible tormentes of hell: of the glorie of heaven; of the benefites of Almighty God; of our sinnes; and of our life and death; for every one of these pointes being well waighed & considered, bee able to prouoke our hearts very much to al the effects above mentioned.

These very pointes Bonauenture hath treated, in a Booke that hee intituled *Fascicularius*, and hath diuided them into the seauen dayes of the weeke. And thus he did, that a man might haue euerie day newe foode for the soule, and new prouocations vnto vertue; and so auoide the tediousnes that he should otherwise haue, in thinking alwaies vppon one same matter.

And for this cause it seemeth good vnto me, to followe that same diuision, and if there be any that shall not well like of this diuision, but will follow some other, hee is at free libertie so to doe, and hath also examples to follow therein: for it importeth not much, what order and diuision he follow in the same. And surely

surely that is the best order to be used in these matters, that each man findeth to bee best for himselfe, and wherein hee taketh most profit and commoditie.

*That the word of God, and the Consideration of heavenly matters, be the foode of our soules.*

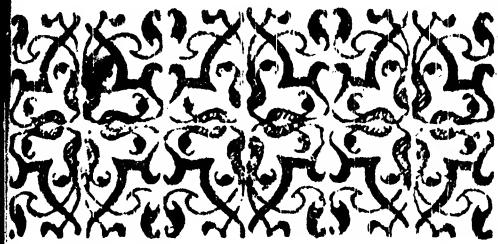
**M**oreouer, I thought it expedient, considering that the food & sustenance of our soule is the word of God, and Consideration of heavenly matter, (for therewith is our soule sustained in the spirituall life, which consisteth in the loue & feare of God,) that like as wee giue ordinarily to our bodies, the refection twise euerie day, to preserue it from fainting in this life; euen so wee should also giue to our soule her ordinarie refection twise euerie day, that she faile not in her life. Howbeit this is not a thing of bounden dutie, nor of precept: but onely of wholesome counsel, especially considering, that the holy Saints, Prophets, & Apostles, haue vsed this exercise more often

often times.

Dan. 6. 10. We reade, that the Prophet Daniell withdrew himselfe to this exercise three times a day; & the Prophet Dauid also vsed to praise God seuen times in the day. And for this cause haue wee here assigned two kinds of Meditations: The one for the Morning, which treateth of those points and matters here before mentioned the other for the Euening or night which treateth of the most bitter Passion of our Redeemer.

But if any man shall haue such want of time, or of deuotion, that he cannot withdraw himselfe vnto this exercise twise in the day, let him yet find the meanes to withdraw himselfe therunto at the least once in the day. And that hee may not lose the fruit thereof, he may exercise himselfe one weeke in the one sort, and another weeke in the other sort. And in so doing, he may taste and take profite of all these godly instructions, which wee haue here set foorth vnto him.

Of



## Of the five parts that may bee exercised in Prayer.

### CHAP. II.

#### I. Preparation.

**B**Efore we enter into prayer, it is very requisite that wee doe first prepare our hearts vnto this holy exercise; following therein the manner and custome of Musicians, who vse to temper and tune their Lute, Viall or Instrument, before they play vpon it. And therefore Ecclesiasticus saith: *Before thou praicst, prepare thy selfe, least thou bee as one that tempteth God.* Eccl. 18. 22

To tempt God, is to desire that he should work a miracle in such things as may bee done by other ordinarie meanes. Seeing therefore that the  
*What it is to tempt God.*

pre-



70 *Of the five parts*

preparation of the heart is such principall meane to obtaine Deuotion; he that goeth about to obtaine it without this meane, sheweth himselfe to haue a desire, that Almighty God should worke a miracle therein, the which, as Ecclesiasticus saith, as it were a tempting of God.

2. *Reading.*

**A**FTER Preparation, it followeth that a man do read that matter which he hath to meditate vpon that day, according to the diuision of the dayes of the Weeke, which we haue made heretofore. And this maner of Reading, is vndoubtedly very necessarye for such as are nouices and young beginners in this exercise, vntill such time as a man do know what he ought to meditate vpon.

3. *Meditation.*

**A**FTERWARDS, when by the vse and practise of certaine dayes hee is well instructed therein, then this reading shall not bee so needfull, but that he may forthwith proceede vnto Meditation.

a *Thankes.*

*Of praier.*

71

4 *Thankesgiuing.*

**A**FTER Meditation, there may followe out of hand a deuoute giuing of thanks to Almighty God, for all such benefits as wee haue receiued: the which ought euermore to accompany all our praiers, according as the Apostle exhorteth vs, saying: *Occupie your selues very earnestly in Praier: watching therein with* Colos 4. 2. *Thankesgiuing.*

For as S. Augustine saith; What thing is there that we can better conceiue in our hearts, better pronounce with our mouths, and better write with our penne, then this short sentence *Deo gratias*, thanks be vnto God? Nothing can bee saide more briefly, nothing can be heard more sweetely, nor vnderstood more ioyfully, or done more fruitfully.

S. *Augustin*

5 *Petition.*

**T**HE last part is Petition, which is properly called Prayer, wherein we desire of Almighty God all such things as are behoouefull, as well for



72 *Of the five parts*

for the saluation of our selues, as  
our neighbours, & of all the whole  
Church of God.

These five parts may be exercised  
in praier; and among other profits  
and commodities, that are wont  
come thereby, this is one, that the  
pointes being duely exercised, do  
minister vnto a man great plenty  
matter whereupon to meditate  
setting before him all these diuer-  
ties of meats, that in case he list  
eate of one, hee may yet eate of another;  
and that when he hath made  
an end of meditation in one matter  
he may forthwith enter into another,  
and so finde varietie of matters  
wherin to continue his meditation.  
I know right well, that neither  
these parts nor this order, is alwaies  
necessary for all persons. Howbeit  
this manner may serue very well for  
all such as are but nouices and young  
beginners in this exercise, that  
they may haue some order & direction,  
wherby to direct themselves at the  
beginning. For certain it is, that some  
things be necessary in the beginning  
to teach an Arte, which afterwards  
when they be once knowne, are but  
superfluous.

*Of Prayer.*

73  
superfluous. And therefore, of any  
thing that shall be here treated, I wil  
not that any man should thinke, that  
I intend to make the same a perpe-  
tuall law or generall rule. For mine  
intent is not in these instructions to  
make any law, but onely to shew an  
introduction, for the direction of all  
such persons as are but nouices and  
beginners in this way. In which  
course, after that they shall bee once  
entred by following this introducti-  
on, then the very vse and experience  
they shall haue in this exercise, and  
much more the holy Ghost wil teach  
them each thing that they haue to  
doe heerein. The which being once  
said in this place, I desire it may bee  
vnderstoode in all the rest of this  
Booke.

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*Of Preparation, which is a  
thing verie requisite to bee used  
before Prayer and Medi-  
tation.*

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C H A P. III.

NOW it shall bee requisite for vs,  
to treat particularly of euerie  
Dd one

## 74 Of Preparation.

one of these five parts aforesaid, and first of Preparation, which ought to goe before the other.

*Preparation vnto prayer may be made diuers wayes.*

*Preparation by considering our owne finnes.*

*Prou. 18. 17*

*Exod. 3. 5.*

*Exo. 19. 10*

Wee said euen now, that it was needfull to vse some preparation of our mind before we enter into prayer. This Preparation may be made in diuers manners of wayes. For a man may dispose himselfe vnto prayer, by calling to mind his finnes and offences; and namely, such sins as he hath committed that present day, and he may accuse himselfe of them, & desire the Lord pardon for them, according to the saying of the Wise man, *The iust man at the beginning, is an accuser of himselfe.*

This manner of Preparation, seemeth to be as it were the pulling off of our hose and shooes to enter into the Holyland, and (as it were) the washing of our garments to goe to receiue Almighty God, when he cometh to treat with men, and to teach them his holy Law. This manner of Preparation we are taught to vse euen by nature it selfe. For we see it is a common maner, that when we goe to request any benefite of our friend of ours whom we haue offended,

## Of Preparation. 75

ded, wee doe first desire of him pardon and forgiuenesse, before we demand any other thing of him. This may be doone sometimes with the hart onely, and sometimes by saying the generall confession, or the fifty one Psalmes; or some other like penitential praier. Wherin good heed must be taken, that these praier be not made in post haste, but with as great quietnes, attention, feeling and repentance of hart as we can.

Howbeit, a man ought not to stay ouer long in this consideration of his finnes, (as some persons do, that both beginne and end heerewith, yea, and passe all their whole life therein.) For albeit this consideration of our finnes be alwaies good (and at the beginning very necessary,) yet it is meete that it be taken with such moderation, as that it occupie not that time which should be bestowed about other better matters. Neither is it needful in this exercise, for a man to consider very particularly his sins, and namely such, as the remembrance whereof may moue him to some euill cogitations: but it is sufficient to make (as it were) a bundle

D d 2 of

of them all, and to drowne them in the bottomlesse Sea of the infinite goodnesse and mercie of Almighty God, with good hope to receiue pardon and remedy of him for the same.

*Preparation by considering the maiestie of Almighty God.*

Wee may also prepare our selues vnto praier, by considering the Maiestie and greatnes of that Lord, vnto whome we goe to speake in prayer. For this consideration will teach vs, with what great reuerence & humility, & with how great attention, it behoueth such a miserable creature as man is, to speake vnto a Lord of so great Maiesty as almighty God is, concerning a matter of so great importance as is his own saluation. But that thou maist vnderstand somewhat of the Maiestie of Almighty God, thou must consider, that the heauens, the earth, and all that is created, is no more before the Maiesty of Almighty God, then a little Emette, or (as the Wiseman sayth) a graine of waight in the ballance. Now if al creatures be no more then an Emette before him, what shalt thou then seeme to bee before him, that art so small a part of the world?

This

This consideration of the Maiestie and greatnes of almighty God, is as it were a profound reuerence, that the soule maketh within it selfe, before the throne of that supreme Maiestie, at what time shee entreth into his Pallace to speake with him.

With this manner of humilitie & reuerence the Sonne of God taught vs to Pray, when making his praier, he cast himselfe prostrate vpon the ground: giuing vs therby to vnderstand, how humble and lowly a man ought to bee; & how much he ought to consider of his owne basenes and vilenes, whensoever he goeth about to speake vnto Almighty God. With this spirite and humble reuerence, a man may repeate thole wordes of the holy Patriarke, where hee saith: *I will speake to the Lord, although I bee but dust and ashes.*

*That it is very good to consider before hand, for what purpose and end wee goe to pray vnto Almighty God.*

**B**UT aboue all this, it shall helpe vs very much in this Preparation.

78 *Of Preparation.*

to consider well what we goe about to doe, when wee settle our selues to Prayer. For if we do well consider it, we go to pray for none other purpose, but to receiue the spirit of God, and the influences of his grace, and the ioye of Charitie and Deuotion, wherewith we see howe the soules of iust persons are replenished at the end of their long & deuout prayers.

Nowe this beeing so, thou maist perceiue heereby, with howe great humilitie and reuerence, and with how great attention and deuotion, thou oughtest to come, when thou doost open the mouth of thy soule to receiue Almighty God. Consider with what great and feruent deuotion the holy Apostles were inflamed, at what time they expected and looked for the comming of the holie Ghost, and by that maiest thou vnderstand, how thou oughtest to prepare thy selfe, when thou goest about to looke for and receiue the same holie Ghost, albeit it be not in such plentifull and abundant wise as the Apostles was.

Hereby thou seest, how close shut thou oughtest to haue the gates of thy

*Of Preparation.* 79

thy vnderstanding and Will, at the time of praier, from all the cares and thoughtes of the world; and how open they ought then to be vnto almighty God alone, that in case hee come to enter therin, he returne not backe againe, finding the gates shut against him, or the Lodging Chambers taken vp and pestered with other guests.

Now with this Preparation and spirit, maist thou present thy selfe in Prayer before the face of the Lord, as that sicke man of the Dropsie did, who stood before him, expecting from his mercifull hand to be restored vnto his health; or as the Leaprous person did, who kneeled downe at his feete, and said humbly vnto him: *O Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me cleane.* Luke. 14. 4. Math. 8. 2. Mark. 1. 40

Consider, that in like manner as a little hungrie dog standeth before his Maisters table, fauning very earnestly vpon him with his eyes, and all his whole bodie, looking euer for some little peece of bread to come from his Table, & after the same sort oughtest thou to present thy selfe before the rich Table, the Lord of

D d 4 Hea-

Acts. I. 14

80 *Of Preparation.*

Heauen, confessing thy selfe to be vnworthie of the whole aboundance of his mercies, & desiring him most humbly, to bestow some little portion thereof vpon thee for thy reliefe. With this lowly spirit maist thou say the Psalme: *Ad te leuani oculos meos, qui habitas in caelis, &c.* The which albeit it be but short, yet it is verie fit and conuenient, to stirre vp and enkindle this foresaid affection in preparing thy selfe vnto prayer.

Psal. 123. 1.

This manner of Preparation or the other, thou maiest (gentle Reader) vse at thy libertie: but the first seemeth to be more conuenient for the night, when a man ought to examine his conscience, and desire pardon and forgiveness of Almighty God, of all such defectes and offences, as he hath offended him in that day.

And the second manner of Preparation is most fit for the Morning when he riseth, before the breake of day, to desire then of almighty God, the assistance and succour of his grace, whereby hee may the better bestow that day in his seruice.

That

*Of Preparation.* 81

*That to knowe howe to pray as a man ought, is a speciall gift of God.*

**B**UT because to knowe howe to pray as a man ought, is a verie special gift of Almighty God, and a worke of the holy Ghost, therefore thou oughtest to desire the Lorde most humbly, both in the one Preparation & in the other, to instruct thee howe to doe thy duety heerein, & to giue thee grace, that thou maiest speak vnto him in thy praier, with such attention and deuotion, with such recollection and closenesse of minde, and with such feare and reuerence, as is behooueful to be vsed before so great a Maiestie; and withal desire him, that thou maist in such wise perseuere, and spend that little time in this exercise of Praier, that thou maist in the end arise from the same with new force and strength to doe all such things as appertaine to his seruice.

It is thought also to be a good Preparati-  
manner of Preparation, to say some on by vocall  
intercessions or Vocall Praiers be- Praiers

D d s. force

fore meditation, of which sort there be many in diuers Bookes of deuotion, and namely in the meditations of S. Augustine, and in the Psalter of Dauid, where there be diuers deuout Psalmes, that will helpe very much to enkindle and stirre vp deuotion. For it is the property of deuout sentences (being saide with an earnest minde and attention) to wound the hart, and to lift it vp vnto Almighty God: the which deuout sentences are so much the more behouuefull & necessary for vs, by howe much wee finde our spirit to be more cold, and distracted.

*With what intention a man ought to come vnto Praier.*

**H**Eere I thinke it necessary to declare with what intention a man ought to come vnto praier. For hee must not goe thereunto chiefly for his owne consolation and delight, (as some that be great louers of themselves vse to doe) but onely to fulfill heerein the will of Almighty God, and to desire of him his grace, and to dispose himselfe for the obtrayning

ning of the same.

And heerewith hee must submit himselfe in such wise into the hands of Almighty God, that he must bee as ready and content to bee without consolations in his praier, as to haue them; remitting himselfe humbly into his hands to dispose of him, and of all things belonging vnto him, as his diuine maiestie shal thinke good; acknowledging on the one side that hee deserueth not any thing of him, and belieuing on the other, that although it bee so in very deed, yet the Lord of his infinite goodnesse and mercy, will doe whatsoever shal be most conuenient and behouueful for his saluation. And therefore a man ought to content himselfe alike, whether the consolation bee great or little, and to take in good part whatsoever vsage the Lord shal shew vnto him, accounting himselfe vnderly vnworthy of all those things that he bestoweth vpon him, and being ready to fulfill all such things as he shal command him, not in respect of the benefites hee hopeth to receiue, but in respect of them hee hath already receiued, and in consideration of his bounden

# 84 Of Preparation.

bounden dutie vnto Almighty God. But wee see that many persons doe quite contrarie to this rule, and bee like herein vnto yong shrewd boyes, who vnlesse they bee dandled and cockred, will not doe the thing that they are commaunded.

I thinke it also requisite heere to aduertise, that when a man mindeth to vse the exercise of prayer in the morning, hee doe goe to bed with this care ouer night, & like as those that intend to bake the next day, doe vse to lay the Leauen ouer night, euen so must a man with a godly carefulnesse, preuent and recommend ouer night vnto the Lord, that thing which he intendeth to meditate the next day following. And in the Morning so soone as he awaketh, he ought forthwith to occupie his heart with this holy thought, be fore any other doe enter therein. For at that time the disposition of our heart is such, that whatsoeuer thought doth first enter into vs, it seaseth and taketh possession of our hart in such wise for that day, that wee shall very hardly afterwards put it away from vs. And for so much as the prayer of many

To bee care-  
full ouer  
Night what  
wee must  
meditate  
the next  
Morning.

# Of Preparation. 85

many persons is very acceptable vnto the Lord, therefore thou shalt doe well to consider in thy Prayer both in the Morning and Euening, what a number of Gods seruants, both men and women in the world, bee at that time watching and perseuering before the presence of Almighty God, humbly confessing their sinnes before him; and crauing pardon for them; and entreating at his hands, such graces and blessings as are needfull for them; with which persons thou oughtest humbly to ioyne thy selfe, that the presence and sweete remembraunce of them, may bee vnto thee a prouocation of deuotion, and an example of perseuerance in thy prayer; and also, that whensoever thou shalt finde thy selfe cold and negligent in this exercise of prayer, and that some thoughtes come into thy mind, moouing thee to end the same, thou maiest bee ashamed, and reprehend thy selfe, by the example of so many good and vertuous persons, which with so good attention and carefulnesse doe perseuere so long time in this exercise of Prayer without ceasing, offering



ring their bodies and soules vnto al-  
mightie God in sacrifice.

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## Of Reading.

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### CHAP. IIII.

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*In what manner we must Reade.*

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**A**fter Preparation followeth rea-  
ding, the which ought to bee  
done, not lightly, as passed ouer in  
haste, but with very great deliberati-  
on and attention, applying therunto  
not only thy vnderstanding, to con-  
ceiue such things as thou readeest,  
but much more thy Will, to taste  
those things that thou vnderstandest.  
And when thou comdest to any de-  
vout place, thou shalt do wel to stay  
& pause somewhat longer thereupon,  
and to make there (as it were) a sta-  
tion, in thinking vpon that matter  
which thou hast read, and in making  
some short prayer vpon it, according  
as S. Bernard counselleth vs, saying:  
*It is requisite oftentimes, to gather and  
procure a little spirite and deuotion out  
of*

*S. Bernard.*

*of the matters that wee reade, and to  
breake off the course of our reading with  
some kinde of praier, by meanes where-  
of, wee may lift vp our hearts vnto Al-  
mightie God, and talke with him, ac-  
cording as the sense and matter of such  
things as we reade doe require.*

Here must I aduertise, that the  
reading be not very long, least it oc-  
cupie the greatest part of the time,  
that ought otherwise to bee bestow-  
ed vpon other more principall and  
necessary exercises. For as S. Augu-  
stine saith: *It is very good both to Reade better than  
and to pray, if we can doe both the one Reading,  
and the other: but in case we cannot per-  
forme them both, then praier is better  
then Reading.* But because in Praier  
there is sometimes labour, and in  
Reading a facilitie, therefore our  
miserable heart doth oftentimes re-  
fuse the labour of praier, and run-  
neth to the delight of Reading, as  
the same holy Father complaining  
of himselfe, saith, that sometimes he  
hath so done.

True it is I grant, that like as when  
there wanteth wheaten-bread, men  
doe eate bread of Rie, or of Oates,  
because they wold not be altogether  
fasting,

28 *Of Reading.*

fasting: euen so when thy hart is in  
such wise distracted, that it cannot  
enter into praier, then maiest thou  
staie somewhat the longer in Rea-  
ding, or ioyne Meditation and Rea-  
ding together, by reading one place  
and Meditating vpon it, & then an-  
other, & another, after the like sort.  
For by this meane, when the vnder-  
standing is once bound vnto the  
wordes of the reading, it cannot so  
easie wander abroad into diuers  
imaginations and thoughts, as when  
it goeth freely and at libertie. And  
yet better it were to wraastle all that  
time with Almighty GOD, as the  
Patriarke Iacob did, that in the end,  
when the wrastring is done, he may  
giue vs his blessing, or graunt vnto  
vs the deuotion which we seeke for,  
or some other greater grace, which  
he neuer denieth vnto them that do  
faithfully labour and strue for the  
loue of him.

*Reading  
with medi-  
tation.*

Gen. 32.

*Of Meditation.*

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*Of Meditation.*

C H A P. V.

*Two kinds of Medita-  
tion.*

AFTER reading, it followeth that  
we doe meditate vpon the place  
that wee haue read. Concerning  
which point it is to be knowne, that  
this meditation is sometimes vpon  
things that may be figured with the  
imagination, as are all the points of *Imaginarie  
meditation.*  
the life and Passion of our Sauour  
Christ.

Sometimes againe, this Medita-  
tion is vpon things that doe rather  
appertain to the vnderstanding, then  
to the imagination: as when wee  
thinke vpon the benefits of Almightie  
God, or vpon his goodnesse and  
mercie, or vpon any other of his per-  
fections.

*Intellectuall  
Meditation.*

This manner of Meditation is  
called *Intellectuall*, and the other *I-  
maginarie*: and wee vse both the one  
manner and the other in these exer-  
cises,

cises, according as the matter of the things doth require.

*How to vse Imaginarie  
Meditation.*

**T**Herfore when the mistery whereupon we intend to meditate, is of the life and Passion of our Saviour Christ, or of any other thing that may be figured by imagination, as of the last day of iudgement, or of hell, or of heauen, we must then figure & represent euerie one of these matters in our imagination, in such wise as it is, or in such wise as it passed, and make account, that euen there in the very same place where we are, all the same passeth in our presence. And this manner of meditating, serueth to this end, that by meanes of such a representation of these things, the consideration and feeling of them may be the more liuely in vs.

*The effects  
of Imagina-  
rie Medita-  
tion.*

Some there be, that imagine, that euery one of these things whereupon they meditate, passeth within their owne heart; for sithence our heart is able to containe within it the forme of Citties and Kingdomes, it is no  
great

great matter for it to containe also within it, the representation and forme of these mysteries. And this manner of meditating, is commonly a great help also to keep in the mind more closely recollected, by causing it to attend to her worke, after the manner of Bees, which worke their Honie combs within their owne hieues. Either of these two waies we may vse in this kinde of Imaginarie Meditation. For in case we goe with our cogitation to Ierusalem, to meditate the thinges that passed there, each thing in his owne proper place, it is a thing that dooth commonlie weaken and hurt the head.

And for this very cause likewise, a man must not fixe his imagination ouer much vpon the thinges whereupon he meditateth. For besides that it wearieth the heade, a man may also fall into some deceite by reason of this vehement apprehension, in perswading himselfe that hee seeth the things really in very deed, which he imagineth with such vehemency and force.

of

*Of Thankesgiuing.*

## CHAP. VI.

THESE three parts beeing ended, there may followe immediatly a Thanksgiuing vnto almightie God for the benefites wee haue receiued, And that we may not interrupt the course of our deuotion with diuers affections and matters, a man may continue this part with the former, taking occasion of such things as he hath meditated vpon, to giue thanks vnto the Lord for the benefite hee hath done vnto him in that Meditation: and with this benefit to ioyne all other benefits, and to giue him most humble and hearty thankses for them all.

*In what order we must exercise  
Thanksgiuing.*

AS for example, when wee haue ended our Meditation vpon any point of the passion, wee may then  
foorth-

foorthwith giue most humble and hearty thanks to the Lord for the benefite of our Redemption? and especially, for that it pleased him, to redeeme vs with so great paines and torments And euen then also let vs giue him most humble thankses for all his other benefits.

In like manner, when we haue meditated vpon our sinnes, wee may giue him thanks for that he hath expected vs so long time, and called vs to repentaunce. And when wee haue meditated vpon the miseries of this life, wee may giue him thankses for that he hath deliuered vs from a great number of them. And when we haue meditated vpon the departing out of this world: wee may giue him thankses, for that hee hath giuen vs life, and granted vnto vs so long a time to repent.

And when we haue meditated vpon the ioyes of heauen, wee may giue him thanks, for that he hath created vs to bee partakers of so great a felicitie. And so likewise may wee proccede in all the rest. And afterwards (according as we haue declared) a man must ioyne with this benefit,

## 94 Of Thanksgiuing.

benefite all other benefites ; as the benefites of Creation, Conseruation, Redemption, Vocation, and Glorification ; of the which benefites wee haue treated heeretofore in the former Meditation. And then for these and other infinite benefites, as well publique as secrete, wee must giue him as many humble and heartie thanks as we can, and call vppon all creatures both of heauen and earth to help vs therein. And with this spirit we may sometimes say that song of the three children; *All ye workes of the Lord, or else the Psalme. My soule praise thou the Lord, &c.*

Dan. 3. 57.  
Psal. 103. 1

## Of Petition.

## CHAP. VII.

**H**ere it remaineth that wee doe treat of the last part of all, which is Petition; which containeth in it two partes : in the one parte, wee make Petition vnto Almighty God for our neighbours; and in the other, for our selues.

The

## Of Petition.

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The first part may bee continued with Thanksgiuing, desiring that all creatures may serue and praise the Lord, who is so worthie to bee praised and serued, for that he is so mercifull and bountifull vnto all his creatures. And with this affection and desire of the glorie of Almighty God, let him pray first and principally for all the vniuersall world, that all Nations and people may knowe and serue so mightie a Lord. Then for all the Catholike Church, and for all the Gouvernours in the same. As for example, wee must praise for kings, Princes, Magistrats that beare rule, either in the Church, or Commonwealth; and for all other inferior Officers and Ministers in the same; that they may bee carefull of their dutie, in directing all the faithfull in the knowledge and seruice of their Creator.

*We must pray for the conversion of all nations vnto God.*

*For all Magistrates & Gouvernours*

Likewise, let him praise for all the members of the Catholicke Church; for the iust persons, that it may please Almighty God to continue them in their vertuous life; for sinners, that it may please him to pardon them: let him pray also for his Parents and kinse-

*For all members of the Catholike Church.*

kinsfolkes, friends, and benefactors and for all that be in tribulation and captiuitie, and for all prisoners and sicke persons, vnto whome hee may (without any distraction or intermission of his prayer) doe the workes of mercie, in recommending them vnto almighty God who created them, and referring the necessities of all persons, into those handes which were stretched vpon the Crosse for them all.

*What things we must demaund for our selues.*

**A**fter this, hee may desire such things for himselfe, as he perceiuethe himselfe to stand in need of, according to the particular necessities and miseries that hee feeleth in his soule, and especially, when he desireth helpe and remedy of Almighty God, against such vices & passions, as doe most trouble and molest him, and to graunt him such vertues as be most needfull for him. This kind of Petition (among other comodities) hath this withal, that it renueth daily in the soule some good purposes and desires

desires or vertues, and moueth it to be the more earnest in dooing that thing, which he hath so oftentimes and so heartily desired, & it maketh him to bee the more ashamed of himselfe, when he dooth it not by calling to mind with how great desire and instancie, he hath desired the Lord to grant him grace to doe it. And of this mind is Saint Chrysostome, where he saith thus: *Such as pray earnestlie in very deede, will not suffer their harts to committe any thing that is vnseemelie for such an exercise, but haue euer their eies vpon almightie God, with whome a little before they talked and were conuersant. And so by that cogitatio, they put away from them all the suggestions of the diuell, when they thinke and consider what a haynous matter it were, that hee that had a little before talked with Almighty God, and desired of him chastitie and holines, with all other vertues, shoulde immediatlye run to his enemies side, & open the gate of his soule to receiue in filthy and dishonest delights, and suffer the diuell to place himselfe in that hart, where a little before the holie Ghost made his abode.*

*S. Chrysost.*

**Ec**

**But**

But it is verie much to be lamented, that there be some persons that thinke to excuse themselues, by saying, that they know not what thing to desire of Almighty God. Surely this is no sufficient excuse. For what beast is so insensible, but that hee knoweth some manner of way howe to signifie the neede he standeth in? What sick man is there, that cannot say, heere it grieveth me? Consider therefore (O man) thy selfe. Consider (I say) with what vices and passions thou art most troubled & molested: if with couetousnes, if with anger, if with detraction, if with vaine glorie, if with stubbornnesse of thine owne will, if with loosenesse of tongue, if with lightnesse of heart, if with the loue of honour, estimation, and delights, if with inconstancie in such good purposes as thou intendest, if with selfe loue, or any other the like passions or pestilences of the mind, & discouer all these wounds plainly one by one, vnto that heavenly Physician, that he may heale & cure thee with the oyntment of his grace

After that thou hast demaunded remedy against thy vices, desire him then

then to graunt thee all such vertues as be most behouueful for thy saluation. And because this is a principall part of this exercise of prayer, wherein oftentimes is spent all the time thereof, with verie great taste and profit, I thinke it good to note heere vnto the deuout reader, those principall vertues which bee, as it were, the pillars of the spirituall life, that thou maist alwayes long and sigh for them, and alwayes desire them verie instantly of the Lord in prayer.

*We must pray to obtaine vertues.*

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¶ Of the most necessarie vertues that are to be demanded in Petition.

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§. I.

First thou must desire of the Lord these 4. vertues, which bee as it were the foundation of al the spirituall life; the which vertues we must alwaies haue before our eyes, because

Ee 2 they be



be alwayes necessarie in all the steps of our life.

These vertues be a comly composition of the inward and outwarde man: Discretion and attention in al such things as we shall either doe or say; That euery thing may be directed according to the iudgement and order of reason; to bridle our tong, and to take a due account of it; And to vse rigour and austeritie in the gouernment of our person.

Now among these vertues, wee haue put the comely composition of the inward and outward man in the first place; because it is the beginning that disposeth vnto all the others. The composition of the inward man, consisteth in hauing Almighty God present in his hart, & the composition of the outwarde man consisteth in doing all thinges in such sort, as is seemly for one that is alwaies in the presence of almighty God, and that he hath him alwayes before his eyes, as the Iudge and witness of his whole life.

After these do follow other foure vertues, wherein consisteth the summe of perfection, which vertues bee in such

such wise annexed and lincked the one to the other, that the one cannot be had without the other. These vertues be, perfect obedience, Mortification of our own proper wil, Fortitude to ouercome all maner of difficultie and labor; And to haue a hatred and contempt of our selues. For it is manifest that the summe of all Christian doctrine, is a perfect obedience and conformitie vnto the will of God, as well in all such things as he commandeth, counselleth and inspireth, as in all that he ordaineth & disposeth concerning vs. This obedience cannot be kept vnlesse we haue a knife in our hand, to cut away all the inordinate appetites of our sensualitie and will, which do withstand the will of Almighty God.

But this stroke no man is able to giue, vnlesse he haue great fortitude of mind to fight with himselfe, and to make mortall warre against his own inclinations and appetites. And this kind of warre none other shall euer make, but hee that hath for the loue of God attained to haue a true and holy abhorring and contempt of himselfe. For looke where ab-

*In these vertues consisteth the summe of perfection.*

horring is, there dooth easily follow euill intreating, and contempt of the thing that is abhorred; but where is nothing but loue, there doth a man verie vnwillingly take the whippe in his hand, to deale roughly with that thing which he loueth. Whereby it appeareth, that no one of these vertues is able to moue one steppe, without the helpe and succour of the other. After these doe follow immediatly other foure verie high and noble vertues, which bee, Humilitie both inward and outward; Pouer- tie both of spirit and of bodie; Pa- tience in all aduersities and tribula- tions; Purennes of intention in good workes, doing all things that we shal doe, all onely for the loue of God, without mixture of any commodi- tie, or respect either spiritual or tem- porall.

After these, doe follow other foure vertues, which are the beginning & end of all perfection: to wit, a most firme faith of such things, as Al- mighty God saith and promiseth: An assured hope in him, as in our true and louing Father in all the ne- cessities and tribulations that shall happen

happen vnto vs; A loue of almightie God, which must alwaies burne in our heartes, and jointly with this loue, to haue a feare and reuerence of his great Maiestie and iustice, which must euermore accompanie all our works.

And with all this aforesayde, wee must ioine perseuerance and conti- nuance in the exercise of all these vertues, the which causeth a man in a small time to attaine to the top of perfection. In these foresayde ver- tues, doth the summe of al perfecti- on principally consist: and there- fore all our studie & diligence must bee employed in seeking them by all meanes possible, and especially by Praier, which is the principal meane whereby all goodnes is obtained.

Heere I thinke good to giue this aduise, that when a man shall de- maund of Almighty GOD any of these vertues, he stay himselfe there- in for a time; and make as it were a station in euerie one of them, in con- sidering briefly the principall mo- tiues that may induce vs to the loue and exercise of such a vertue.

*How to desire of God the vertue  
of Charitie.*

**A**S for example. When we shall desire of almightie God the vertue of Charitie, which is the loue of God, we may say in this wise: Grant mee grace O Lord I beseech thee, that I may loue thee with al my hart, and with all my soule, for that thou art an infinite goodnesse and excellencie, that deserueth to bee loued with infinite loue; and besides this, for that thou art my onely benefactor, my Father, my Creator, my last end, and the Spouse of my soule, vnto whom all loue is due.

*How to desire the vertue  
of Hope.*

**I**N like manner when thou shalt desire the vertue of Hope, thou maist say in this wise: Giue me grace also O Lord I beseech thee, that in all the necessities and tribulations that shall happen vnto mee in this life, I may trust in thee, seeing thy mercie is infinite and thy promises true,

true, and the merites of thy only begotten Sonne bee of infinite value, which doe speake and make intercession for me. After this sort maiest thou desire the feare of God, and humility, with other vertues. The forme of which petitions I thinke not meet to note here particularly in writing. For like as it is said, that that meate doth more profit the sickman, which hee himselfe eateth and cheweth with his teeth, then that which is giuen vnto him in drinke: euen so is that prayer wont to bee more profitable, which is framed by him that prayeth with such words as the holy Ghost teacheth him, then that prayer which is made and compounded with other folks words, which oftentimes be said and passed very lightly ouer, without any manner of attention or affection.

This last part which is Petition; besides that it is verie easie to bee done, is also verie profitable. For as we said before, it is not only an exercise of Prayer, but also of al vertues, and as it were a reading and conference of them all: wherein a man reneweth all his good purposes and desires,

Psal. 112.

fires, and recordeth to his memorie, the principall points and Articles of the Law of God, which is the continuall exercise of the iust man; of whome it is said, that he meditateth vpon the Law of the Lord both day and night.

These five parts aforesaid, may be vsed in the exercise of Prayer; albeit (as we haue said) they bee not all necessarie to bee vsed at all times. For sometimes all the time of Prayer is spent in meditation alone, or in petition. Neuertheles, I thought good to specifie heere all these partes of Prayer, that no man might leaue off this holy exercise for want of matter, and also that at such time as deuotion fayleth, (which is no iust cause why we should relent and withdraw our selues from good exercises) a man might haue matter wher-vpon to occupie himselfe during that time, doing on his part so much as lyeth in him, which is the thing that Almighty God requireth principally of vs.

Here is diligently to be noted, that among all these five parts of prayer, the best is, when the soule talketh with

with Almighty God, as it dooth in petition. For in Reading or Meditation, the vnderstanding discourseth with little labour wheresoeuer it thinketh good. But when we talke vnto Almighty God, then the vnderstanding mounteth vp on high, and after it followeth also the will, and then hath a man commonly on his part, greater deuotion and attention, and greater feare and reuerence of the maiestie of almighty God; with whom hee speaketh, and withall, an humble and feruent desire of the thing which hee demandeth of him.

And this mouing and lifting vp of the spirite, with all these actes of vertues accompanying it, do leaue the soule in a more noble state, and better edified, then any other discourse whatsoeuer it bee, as euerie man may perceiue by experience in himself. For it is euident, that in the discourse of Meditation, there is no other thing but only a godly inquisition and consideration of spiritual things, the which as it is an acte of the vnderstanding, so it is of little profite, or commoditie; but in the deuour

108 *Of Petition.*

deuout praier, there is made a concurrence and general assembly (in a manner) of all vertues, & with their wings, the soule listeth it selfe vp on high, and attaineth to be ioyned & vnited with the almightie and euer-living God.

And although this spirituall communication and cōference with almighty God, be the best point of all the exercises of praier: yet among all the communications with him, the best & most profitable, is the communication of loue, at such time as we be actually louing of Almighty God, and praying him, and desiring him with great instancie and most earnest desires, to graunt vs that wee may loue him. For sithence Charity is the greatest of al vertues, there is nothing more acceptable vnto almighty God, nor more pleasant and profitable vnto a man, the vse, practise, and exercise of this so excellent a vertue.

This the holy fathers do call the exercise of aspiring vnto the loue of God. And to this end were Meditation, Prayer, and all other godly exercises ordained. And therefore it is giuen

*Of Petition.*

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giuen for a general rule vnto al such as doe pray, that they labour & endeavour so much as lieth in them, to lift vp their spirite vnto this diuine communication, which is to speak and treat with almighty God himselfe, and especially concerning his loue, and the exercises of aspiring vnto him.

And for this cause it shall do well to leaue this petition of the loue of God, vntill the end of all the exercises of prayer, and so to reserue the best wine for the ende of this banquet, to the intent that when a man is come to the end of his iourney, he may stay himselfe herein so long as he listeth. Howbeit, it shall not be amisse both to begin and ende with this petition of the loue of G O D, whensoever the holy Ghost shall open him a way, and direct him vnto the same.

Moreouer, I thinke it meete here to giue this aduertisement, that in all such things as we shall demandaund, 1. Cor. 1. 30. wee doe alleage alwaies on our behalfe, the merits of Iesus Christ, our onely & true Sauour; who (as the Apostle saith) *Is our Iustice, wisdom, sancti-*

*sanctification and redemption.* Vppon his merites wee ought patiently to stay our confidence. And his merites we ought to present before the diuine Maiestie, reckoning them, and offering them one by one vnto the heavenly Father, and taking (as S. Bernard saith) out of that Treasure, all such things as are necessarie for vs. For this is that Lord that hath sanctified and offered himself in sacrifice, to the intent that we might bee holy indeede.

Rom. 8. 31. Wherefore, If God bee for vs, who shall bee against vs? If God iustifie vs, who shall condemne vs? This is he (sayth Saint Peter) of whome all the prophets beare witnesse: that by him is obtained pardon and remission of sinnes. So that in the vertue & name of this Lord, wee ought to take a good hart and courage with vs, whē we go to make our prayers vnto Almighty God, and haue this confidence, that what soeuer wee shal duely demand, by him shall bee graunted vnto vs.

For the principal condition that our petition must haue, that it may be effectual before Almighty God,

is

is (as Saint Iames saith) to make the Iam. 1. 6. same with faith and confidence.

*Whereupon our confidence must bee grounded, when we make petition vnto Almighty God.*

THIS confidence must not bee grounded principally vpon our owne selues, nor vpon our owne workes and merites, but vpon the workes and merites of his onely begotten and best beloued Sonne, our Sauior I E S V S C H R I S T, and ioynly therewith, vpon the infinite mercy and goodnesse of Almighty God, which can neuer bee overcome with any kind of sinne or iniquitie.

And besides this, our confidence must be also grounded vpon the truth of the words & promises of Almighty God, who hath promised in all the holy Scriptures, neuer to faile that man, that with all his heart shal conuert himselfe vnto him, and call vpon him, and repose his whole trust and confidence in him. And albeit he that prayeth, hath been vntil that time

S. Ierom.

time neuer so great and hainous a sinner. yet let him not therefore be dismayd, for (as S. Ierom saith) our sinnes past doe not condemne vs, if we take no delight therein. Whereby it appeareth, that they be deceiued, that in considering their owne defects and weaknesse, doe mistrust that Almighty God will not heare them: and they doe not consider that the principall foundations of this confidence are the merites of our Sauour Christ, and the mercie of Almighty God, and the truth of his holy word, *which* (as the Prophet saith) *is a shielde vnto them that put their trust in him.*

Note three  
principall  
foundations  
of our con-  
fidence in  
prayer.  
Psal. 90. 5.

Certaine aduises to be  
*observed in these five parts aboue  
named: and especially in  
Meditation.*

## C H A P. VIII.

**H**Auing now spoken of the principall parts of prayer, I thinke it conuenient to giue certaine aduises and instructions, which ought  
to

to be obserued in them al, and especially in Meditation, whereof wee minde to treat principally in this place.

## The first Aduise.

*That in our Meditation, we must  
not for the obseruing of our ordinarie  
course, put away from vs any good  
thought or consideration, wherein we  
finde more deuotion.*

## S. I.

**T**HE first Aduise is (concerning the matter of Meditation) that although it be well doone for a man to obserue these speciall pointes of Meditation, according as they be heere before diuided by the daies of the week, for to exercise himselfe in them; yet if in the midst of his waie there be offered vnto him any other consideration, wherein hee findeth more sweetnes and profite, he ought not to put the same away from him to fulfill his ordinarie taske. For it  
standeth



standeth not with reason, that wee should extinguish the light which the holy Ghost hath begun to giue vs in any good thought, for to occupie our selues in another thought, wherein (perhaps) the same light shall not be giuen vnto vs. And besides this, sith the principall end of these Meditations, is to obtaine some deuotion and feeling of diuine things, it were against reason, when we haue already obtained the same with some good consideration, that we should goe about to seeke for it by another way.

Howbeit although this bee verie true, (speaking ordinarily) yet may not a man therefore take heerein so great liberty, as vpon euerie occasiō that is offered vnto him, to be moued forthwith very lightly to forgoe that thing out of his handes, which he hath as it were in possession, for some other thing which hee is desirous to haue; vnlesse it be at such a time, as hee perceiueth a more certaine profite in the one, then in the other.

The

## The second Aduise.

*That in our Meditation, we must eschew the superfluous speculation of our vnderstanding, and commit this busines to the exercise of the affections of our will.*

### S. II.

THE second aduise is, that he labour to eschewe in this exercise, the superfluous speculation of the vnderstanding, and endeavour to vse this matter rather with affections, and feelings of the Will, then with discourses and speculations of the vnderstanding.

It is therefore to be noted, that the vnderstanding on the one side helpeth, and on the other side it may hinder the operation of the Will, to wit, the loue and feeling of diuine things. For as it is necessary, that the vnderstanding doe goe before the Will to guide it, and giue it knowledge

ledge what it ought to loue; so when the speculation of the vnderstanding is ouermuch, then it hindereth the operation of the will; for so much as it suffereth it not to haue place and time to worke.

And therefore like as it is said of the poyson which is put into Treacle, that if it bee little it is wholsome and necessarie, but if it be ouermuch it is hurtfull: euen so likewise may wee say after a sort in this exercise, that the seeking to know God with simplicitie, helpeth the will the more to loue him; but the seeking to know him with ouer-much speculation, hindereth the Will, and causeth the operation therof for that time to be the more feeble and weake.

And the reason thereof is, for that the vertue and power of our soule being finite and straited within certaine boundes and limits, the more it imployeth her vertue and force on the one part, the lesse remaineth to be employed on the other, euen like this Fountaine that runneth through two Pipes, the more water that it dischargeth by the one Pipe, the lesse it hath to yeeld through the other,

her. And after the like sort doth the soule principally by the operation of the vnderstanding, by the which (for that it is so noble and so excellent a power) the soule imployeth and poureth out all her whole force in such wise, that in a manner she worketh nothing at all by her other powers, at such time as the vnderstanding is verie attent, and earnestly occupied in the vehement speculation of any matter.

And therefore we find by experience, that a man may with more facilitie preferue the affection of the deuotion in any exercise of the bodie, wherein hee laboureth with his hands, then when he hath his vnderstanding busily occupied and attent in the speculation of any matter. For the vnderstanding and the will, bee as it were two balances of our soule, the which are disposed in such sort, that the ascending of the one, is the descending of the other, and so contrariwise.

So that if the speculation doe encrease ouer much, then the affection thereby decreaseth; and if contrariwise the affection doe increase, then the

the speculation forthwith decreaseth: and this is the cause why the Patriarke Iacob was made lame of one of his feete, at what time he received the blessing; for whereas our soule hath two feete wherewith to goe vnto Almighty God, which be the Vnderstanding and the Will, it is requisite that the one foote be weakened, to wit, the Vnderstanding in his speculation, if the Will (which is the other foote) shall enioy Almighty God in the rest and quietnesse of contemplation.

And so it is seene by experience, that in case at such time as the soule is enioying of Almighty God, it doeth but turne aside, to seeke to vnderstand or search some point or matter appertaining vnto God, it looseth forthwith at the verie same instant, the deuotion which it had, and that soueraigne good thing vanisheth the away from him which before he enioyed. And therefore not without good cause dooth the Bridegroome aduise the Spouse in the Canticles, saying: *Turne away thine eyes from me, for they haue made me to stie.*

Wherefore I counsaile a man in this

his exercise of meditation, to occupie his Vnderstanding in speculation with as little curiosity as is possible, and to content himselfe with a simple sight and knowledge of diuine things, to the intent that the vertue of his soule recollecting all her forces together, may imploy her self by this affectiue part, (I meane by the affections of the will) in louing and reuerencing the chiefest goodnesse; to wit, Almighty God.

Wherby it appeareth, that those men take not the right course heerein, that in praier doe meditate in such wise vpon diuine mysteries, as if they should studie to preach them; the which disorderly manner, is rather to cause the Spirit to wander more abroade, then to collect it; and rather to goe out of himselfe, then to keepe within himselfe. And heereof it cometh, that when they haue an end of their exercise of praier, they remaine as drie, and without any iuice of deuotion, and as easilie moued to follow euery kind of lightnes, and vanity of the world, as they were before their exercise.

For (to speak the very truth) they haue

*We must not meditate vpon diuine mysteries in such wise as if we studied to preach them.*

haue not praied, but rather talked & studied, which is a thing farre different from praier.

Such persons ought to consider that in this exercise of praier & Meditation, wee rather come to heare then to speake. For (as the Prophet saith) *Such as come vnto the Lords feet, shall receiue his doctrine, as hee receiued it, and sayd: I will hearken what the Lord speaketh within mee.* Wherefore I conclude, that all this business of meditation, consisteth in speaking little, and in louing much, and in giuing place to the Will, that it may ioyne it selfe with all his forces vnto Almighty God. And we must not spurre forwardes these two powers of the soule alike, nor walke in this way with equal paces, but a speciall dexteritie is requisite to be vsed to stir vp the Will, and to quiet the vnderstanding, that it hinder not with his curious discourses the operation of loue.

Thou must make account also, that in this exercise thou goest in a Chariot drawne with two Horses, wherof the one is very forward and quicke, and the other very slow and dull,

dull: and that thou must beare the ward then bridles in thy hand with such dexteritie, that the one thou must hasten forward, and hold the other backe, that so they may go together the one by the other.

And if thou desire to haue another more liuely example, make account that the vnderstanding must behaue it selfe towards the Will, as the Nurse doth towards the Child which shee nurseth, who after that she hath chewed the meate, she then putteth it into the childs mouth, that the child may taste and feede thereupon. For otherwise, if the Nurse should but chewe the meate and also eat it vp her selfe, leauing the child without any meate, it is certaine that shee should doe great iniurie to the child, in suffering it to die for hunger, by eating vp that meate, which was giuen vnto her for the child.

*That the vnderstanding is as it were a Nurse to feede the Will in the exercise of Prayer.*

**N**OW in this wise must the Vnderstanding behaue it selfe towards the Will in the exercise of prayer; for it appertaineth to the vnderstanding to chew the spirituall matters, as the Nurse cheweth meate for the Childe; but the Vnderstanding must not retaine the same spirituall matters for it selfe alone, but after that it hath once chewed them, it must offer them to the Will, to the intent that the Will may taste & feed thereupon, and be the more enkindled and confirmed in vertue and goodnesse, with the taste and feeling of those spirituall matters.

The victuals that doe enter in by the gates of a City, ought to pay onely a tribute and impost; but in case the Porter should take vp all the victuals for himselfe alone, and suffer none to come into the Market, it is certaine that the inhabitants of the Cittie would die for hunger. Now in like maner, if the vnderstanding,

which

which is as it were the first gate of our soule, (whereby the spiritual sustenance entereth vnto it) doe take vp all that shoulde passe by it for it selfe alone, in what case shall the will then be, but euen very hungrie and dry, and in great necessity of all vertue and goodnes?

The hunting hound if he be good, will not eate the Hare that he hath taken, but keepeth it faithfully vntill his Maisters comming; and in like maner ought our vnderstanding to doe, vwhen it hath founde out anie high and secret truthes; forsomuch as it must not retaine all for it selfe alone, but reason would that it shold assigne them ouer to the Will, that she as the Mistris in this behalfe may serue her selfe with them.

And for this respect diuers deuout and simple persons are truelie verie happy, who as they know little, so whe they come vnto almighty God, they are little hindered with the discourses of their vnderstanding, and therefore in their praiers and meditations, they finde their willes more tender and more plyant, and better prepared vnto euery godly affectiō.

F f 2

Nowe

Now if thou desire to know howe thou shouldest behaue thy selfe herein, among manie other wayes that may serue in this case, thou maist vse this; In every good thing that thou shalt thinke vppon, either in prayer or out of prayer, be carefull to goe out of hand therewith vnto almighty God, as the young childe dooth, who with euerie thing that hee findeth, goeth out of hande to his Mother, and tatleth with her of it. And so in like manner, when in thy prayer, or at any other times, thou findest any spiritual Iewel, thou must lift vp thy hart to almighty God, eyther to loue him, or to adore him, or to reuerence him, or to prayse him for the same, according as the matter requireth; and thereby also to take occasion to humble thy selfe before him, and to desire of him his grace. It shall bee a great helpe also heerevnto, to haue the spirite of true humilitie, which causeth a man to appeare before Almighty God, verie poore and naked, and to prostrate himselfe before that most high soueraigne Maiestie, & to be more carefull to desire him of his mercie, for the

the curing of the great miseries which he knoweth in himselfe, than to search the profundnes of his high mysteries to vnderstand them. And by so doing, hee commeth to bee in the presence of God, as a malefactor that is condemned to death would hee when hee should enter into the Kings Pallace, to aske him pardon; who would go with such a great and deepe impressiō of his misery, that he would scarcely haue either eyes to see, or hart to think vpon any other thing, but only vpon his owne present necessity and danger.

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### The third Aduise

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*Which prescribeth also boundes and limits to the Will, that it be neither too excessive, nor too vehement in her exercise.*

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#### §. III.

THE former aduise teacheth vs how wee ought to quiet our vnderstanding, & commit all this businessse

ness, to our Will; but this present advise prescribeth also bounds and lymits to the Will, that it be neither too excessiue, nor too vehement in her exercise.

Wherefore ye must vnderstande, that the deuotion which wee seeke to obtaine, is not a thing that may be gotten with force of Armes, (as some persons thinke,) who laie on great loades of enforced sighings & sobbings, imagining therby to procure teares and compassion, when they thinke vpon the Passion of our Sauour. For such force, doth commonlie cause the heart to become more drie, and more vnable to receiue the Lordes visitation, according as a holy father affirmeth.

Moreouer, it doth commonly preiudice & hurt the health of the bodie; yea, and sometimes leaueth the soule so astonied and agast, (by reason of the little taste she hath there receiued) that she is loth to returne againe to this exercise, as to a thing which she hath tried by experience to haue been very painful and yrkesome vnto her. And therefore if the Lorde shall send vs teares, or other  
the

the like feelings in our prayer, wee ought humbly to accept them, and to giue him thanks for them. But for a man to wring them out (as it were) by force of Armes, it is no point of wisdom.

Hee must content himselfe with doing sincerely what lyeth in him, that is, hee must suppose himselfe to be present at such grievous torments as our Sauour hath suffered, beholding with a sincere and quiet eye, as well such paines as he hath suffered, as also the loue and Charitie that moued him to suffer them. And when he hath thus done, let him not vex or trouble himselfe any further, though the Lord send him not teares and compunction of heart.

And he that cannot thus doe, but shall perceiue himselfe to bee ouermuch troubled in this exercise, let him not strue to passe forwardes, but let him humble himselfe before Almighty God, with inward quietnesse and simplicitie, and desire him of his grace, that hee may be able to proceede in his Prayer and Meditation, without such great trouble and dauager vnto him. And in case it



shall please the Lord to graunt him this quietnesse of mind, he shall feele a more inward hartie deuotion thereby, then hee was wont to feele with the disquietnesse of his mind, and it shall endure much longer. After this sort may a man continue in prayer and meditation a long time together, without feeling any heauinesse or griefe: but that man cannot so doe, that shall meditate after the other enforced manner before specified.

And for this cause wee must take diligent heede, that if at any time there doe arise in the soule verie feruent motions of sensible deuotion, or excessiue sobbings and sighings, wee suffer not our selues to be carried away with them, but we must temper them with great moderation, and dissemble them as much as wee can, and withall, endeouour to keepe and continue that consideration and thoght within vs, which caused those feruent motions: I meane heereby, that we must remooue away from vs those stormes and alterations of the flesh: to wit, these vehement sobbings and sighings, and enioy in our soule

soule with quietnes, the light and deuotion which almightie God hath then sent vnto vs.

And after this sort we shall continue in our exercise a longer time, & our consolation shall take deeper roote inwardly in our soules, & shall not giue any outward shewe thereof with weeping, sobbing, and other external signes, which can hardly be auoided without great paine, in case a man doe once accustome himselfe very much vnto such sensible motions & feruours, which the stronger and mightier they shew outwardly, the more doe they quench the light inwardly, & be an impediment vnto vs, that wee cannot proceede forward in our praier and Meditation.

True it is, that at the first beginning of nouices in spirituall exercises, such feruours can very hardly be eschewed. For then the great wonder that a man hath of the newnesse and profoundnes of diuine thinges, maketh him to enter into so great an admiration and astonishment, that he cannot refraine himselfe fro this feruency. But after that with the vse of daily meditatio of diuine thinges,

the newnes of them ceaseth, then is his heart quieted, and although he loue Almighty God with greater vehemencie, yet hath he not such sensible feruour and disquietnes in his loue.

And so we see that the new wine, and the pottle of water, when it be- ginnerth first to trie the vnwonted heate of the fire, it boileth so force- ably that it bubbleth vp, & runneth ouer the brim: but after that it hath boiled a certaine space, it seetheth then much better, and is much ho- rer, and yet with lesse noise and ve- hemencie.

That man which was lame from his mothers wombe, whome S. Pe- ter healed, (as it is declared in the Acts. 3. 8. acts of the Apostles) so soone as hee perceiued himselfe to be whole and perfectly curde of his former lame- nesse, the holy Scripture sayth, that he walked and leaped, and praised Almighty God.

This man was not content onely to goe, but as one that had beene so long time as it were bounde handes and feet, and finding by experience his new libertie, hee then stretcheth forth

foorth his limmes to the vttermost hee could, and leaped and skipped with great ioy and admiration. How- beit it is to bee thought, that after- wards he would walke more quietly, and not leape and skippe all his life time: but as then, the great ioy hee had of his new and vnaccustomed health, would not suffer him to bee in quiet.

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### The fourth Aduise.

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*Which followeth of the foresaid Aduises: And here it is declared, what manner of attention wee ought to haue in our exercise of Prayer and Medi- tation.*

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#### S. II II.

OF all these aduises aforesaid, we may gather what manner of at- tention we ought to haue in prayer. For in this exercise it is chiefly ex- pedient for vs to haue our heart not heauie or dull, but liuely, attent, and lifted vppe on high. In figure whereof, wee reade that the An- gell

Ezech. 2. I gell said to the Prophet Ezechiel, that hee should arise, and stand vpon his feete, when the Angell would talke with him, and declare vnto him the diuine mysteries.

I. Reg. 6.  
24.

In like maner we reade, that those two Cherubins which Salomon placed at the two sides of the Ark of the Testament, stood with their wings lifted vp on high, and stretched abroad as if they would flie, to signifie what a great attention and lifting vp of the spirit, a man ought to haue at such time as hee presenteth himselfe before almightie God, to speake and stand before him.

But as it is necessarie on the one side, to be in prayer with such an attention and close recollection of the mind; euen so on the other side, it behooueth that this attention bee qualified with temperance and moderation, that it bee neither preiudiciall to our health, nor any impediment to deuotion.

For some there be that doe weary their heades with ouermuch violence, whiles they labor to be attent vnto those things that they meditate vpon. And others againe there bee that

that to auoid this inconuenience, are in their meditation verie slacke and negligent, and verie easie to be carried away with euerie wind. Now to eschew these two extremities, it is expedient that wee vse such a meane, that we doe neither with ouermuch attention wearie our head, nor with carelesnesse or negligence, suffer our thoughts to goe wandering whether soeuer they will. So that like as wee vse commonly to say vnto him that rideth vpon a kicking flinging horse, that hee must take good heede how hee holdeth the raines of his bridle, and keepeth a meane therein, that is, he must hold them neither too hard nor too slacke, that the horse neither turne backward, nor run too headlong forward: euen so must we endeavour, that our attention may proceede in our prayers with moderation, and not with violence, and with a temperate carefulnesse and diligence, and not with excessiue labour and trauaile.

Of both these pointes wee be aduertised in the holy Scripture. For of the one Salomon saith: *Who so squi-*  
*seth ouermuch the Pappes to get out*  
*milke,*

*Attention*  
*with mod-*  
*eration.*

Pro. 30. 33.

*milke, shall wring<sup>out</sup> out bloud. And of*  
 Esa. 66. 10. *the other point, the Prophet Esay*  
*saith: Reioyce with her all yee that*  
*mourne for her, that yee may suck and be*  
*satisfied with the breastes of her consol-*  
*ation.*

*Of two ex-*  
*treames, the*  
*least is to be*  
*chosen.*

Howbeit, in case wee faile of the  
 meane, and doe leane vnto any of  
 these two extremities, it is lesse hurt  
 to leane vnto ouermuch attention,  
 then vnto carelesnesse & neglecting  
 of our attention. For a man is pro-  
 uoked to carelesnesse & negligence  
 by his owne corrupt and euill incli-  
 ned nature: but hee is not so prouo-  
 ked vnto attention. And therefore  
 like as a house that is built vpon the  
 side of a hill, should not lose much  
 in the building, if at any such time  
 as it cannot be built by line and leuel  
 iust vpright, the building therof doe  
 more bend rather vpwarde then  
 downeward: euen so shall not our  
 attention take any preiudice, if at  
 what time it cannot continue in our  
 prayers in such a mediocritie as wee  
 desire, it doe rather decline to that  
 extremitie, wherein is least daunger,  
 which is, (as wee haue said) rather  
 to ouermuch attention, then to  
 care

carelesnesse and negligence.

This aduise is of so great impor-  
 tance, that for want hereof wee haue  
 seene that certain persons haue pas-  
 sed ouer many yeers with taking lit-  
 tle profite by their praiers, for that  
 they haue beene carelesse, dull, and  
 (as it were) neither hote nor cold  
 therein. And others contrariwise,  
 haue fallen into great sicknesse, and  
 haue hurt their heades with ouer-  
 much heate and vehemencie, which  
 they haue vsed in their meditations.  
 But especially we must be well wary,  
 that at the beginning of meditati-  
 on, wee doe not trouble and wearie  
 our heads with ouermuch attenti-  
 on.

For by so dooing, wee shall want  
 force & strength to passe forwardes  
 therein; as it commonly happeneth  
 to the traualer, when he maketh  
 too great hast in his going at the be-  
 ginning of his iourney.

The

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## The fift Aduise.

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*That wee must not bee dismaide,  
nor giue ouer our exercise of Praier and  
Meditation, at such time  
as we want deuotion  
therein.*

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### §. V.

**B**V T among all these aduises, the principall is, that he that praieith be not dismaide, nor giue ouer his exercise, when he feelth not forth with such sweetnesse of deuotion as he desireth: as some persons vse to doe, who are verie much deceiued herein.

Wherefore it is to be noted, that in very deed the hart of man is very like vnto a troubled water, which cannot suddainly be cleered againe, be the diligence neuer so great that is bestowed about it, but it must haue time and space, to bee cleered and settled by little and little. And in  
such

## Meditation.

such case vndoubtedly is our heart, which as it is wont to bee troubled, with the daily intermedling and dealing in worldly affaires, so after that it is once troubled, it cannot forthwith be settled and quieted in so short a space againe; but it must needes haue conuenient space and time for the same. And therefore Ecclesiastes saith verie well; *That the end of prayer is better then the beginning:* because at the beginning of Prayer, the heart is troubled and disquieted, but in the end it is more settled and quieted, and better disposed vnto this holy exercise.

Eccle. 7.10

Wherefore, like as he that will enkindle a fire in greene wood, must haue patience, and expect vntill the wood be dried by little and little, and besides all this, it is requisite, that he continue for a time in blowing & enkindling it, and doe shedde also some teares with the smoke, if hee will enioy the fire according to his desire; euen so it behooueth vs oftentimes to labour and perseuere in the beginning of prayer, in case wee will in the end enioy the sweete & cleare fire of deuotion, and of the loue of  
God.

Now for this cause it is requisite for him that prayeth, to expect the comming of the Lord with longanimitie and perseuerance. For it is very conuenient, as well in respect of the glorie of his high diuine Maie-  
 stie, and basenesse of our condition, as also for the greatnesse and importance of the affaires that we haue in hand, that we doe oftentimes attend and watch at the gates of our sacred  
 Prou. 8. 33 Pallace. *Blessed is the man, saith the euermlasting wisedome, that heareth my wordes, and watcheth dayly at my gates, & tarieth at the porch of my house: for who so shall find mee, shall find life, and he shall receiue saluation of the Lord.*  
 And the Prophet Ieremie saith, *It is good to expect the saluation of the Lord God with silence.*

Lam. 3. 26.

Psal. 40. 1.

The proud man, and hee that mistrusteth the providence of Almighty God, hath neither patience nor humilitie to expect the Lordes comming: but the humble man saith with the Prophet: *I expected againe and againe for the Lord, & he heard my prayer.*

If the Fisher or Hunter haue not patience

patience to expect for the game that he seeketh, what profite shall he get by his trauaile? Nowe in this our fishing and hunting in praier, beeing of so great importance as it is, wee may account a long time well bestowed, that is employed in watching & expecting for so rich and so happy a treasure as is the Almighty and euerm liuing God.

Of that couragious and constant woman which Salomon describeth in his Prouerbs, (among other notable things) he saith thus: *That shee did as the Merchants ship, which brought her bread from far Countries. Whereby he giueth vs to vnderstand, that whē wee shall not finde this bread of life forthwith according to our desire, wee must then trauaile and saile so long time, as shal be necessary vntill we finde it.*

If thou shalt perseuere in calling Matth. 7. 7  
 (saith our Sauour Christ) assure thy Mar. 11. 24  
 selfe that at the length thou shalt haue answer. For it happeneth oftentimes, that that thing which is denied in the beginning of praier, is graunted at the ende of praier with great increase.

Happy

Happy therefore are those soules, that perseuere in praier after this sort; for vndoubtedlie the greater their perseuerance is, the greater a boundaunce shall they haue of his grace. One of the principall things that those persons must haue, that do dispose themselves to receiue great gifts and fauours of almightie God, is longanimitie & patience of hart, to expect faithfully so long time for them as almightie God would they should expect; and in the meane season to comfort themselves with that hope of the Prophet, which sayth; *If he shal delay his comming, I will not faile to tarry for him, for he will surely come, and wil not stay ouer long.*

Nowe when thou hast after this sort expected a certaine time for the Lords comming, in case the Lorde shall then come vnto thee, giue him most hartly thanks for his comming; and if it seeme vnto thee that he cometh not, humble thy selfe then before him, & acknowledge that thou art not worthy to receiue that thing which he giueth not vnto thee: and let this content thee for that time, that thou hast made a sacrifice of thy selfe

selfe, denied thine owne will, crucified thy appetite, striuen with the diuell, and with thy selfe, and done at the least what thou couldest for thine owne part.

And in case thou haue not adored the Lord with sensible adoration according to thy desire, it is sufficient that thou hast adored him in spirit and in truth; according as his will is to be adored. And trust mee assuredly in this point, that this is the most dangerous passage of all this nauigation, & the place where true deuout persons are proued and tryed; and that if thou escape well out of this daunger, thou shalt haue prosperous successe in all the rest.

To conclude, if (all this notwithstanding) it seeme vnto thee, that it were but time lost to perseuere in prayer, and to trouble and weary thy head without any profite, in such a case I account it not any inconuenience, if when thou hast done what lyeth in thee, thou take then some deuout Booke, and change for that time thy prayer into reading. Howbeit with this condition, that thy reading be not passed ouer with too great

Iohn. 4. 24



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great hast or speede, but leifurely, & with great attention and consideration vnto such things as thou doest reade, and intermingle now & then in places conuenient, praier with reading, which is a thing both verie profitable, and very easie to be performed by all kinde of perions, be they neuer so rude, and newly entered into this way.

Of fixe pointes that are  
to be meditated vpon in the holy  
Passion of our Sauour  
Christ.

*The Last Chapter.*

FORsomuch as the most holy Passion of our Sauour Christ is the principal matter of meditation, it meeteth that sithence we haue hitherto treated of meditation in general, we do now treate particularlie how we ought to meditate vpon the Passion of our Sauour Christ; to the intent that we may know, how to behaue our selues in this matter.

But heere we must first presuppose,

*vpon the Passion.* 143

pose, that among all the deuotions in the world, there is none more leifure, none more profitable, or more vniuersal for all kind of persons then the remembrance of the holy Passion of our Sauour Christ. For considering that our Sauour Christ is (as he himselfe saith) *The way, the truth, and the life*, there is none other exercise more fit and conuenient to direct vs to goe vnto God, to knowe God, and to enioy God, then to fix alwayes our eyes vpon our Sauour Christ. For though Christ bee vnto vs the way, the truth, and the life, in all things wheresoeuer wee consider him, yet is hee most specially so vnto vs, when wee behold him vpon the Crosse. And therefore Saint Bernard said verie deuoutly; *Well may I (O Lord) compassse about heauen, and earth, yet shall I not find thee but vpon the Crosse. There thou lvest, there thou sleepest at noone day.*

Ioh. 14.6.

S. Bernard.

But leauing now this matter for another place, I will onely treate at this present, after what sort we ought to behaue our selues, when we meditate vpon the holy Passion of our Sauour Christ: for there be some simple

ple persons, that seeke nothing els in this holy exercise, but onely to shed a fewe teares, in taking compassion vpon the bitter paines and sorrowes of our Sauour, and so do stay themselves in this point alone, without passing any further. And albeit this taking compassion of our Sauours paines, be verie good and necessarie, (for so much as it is the foundation of all the rest, as hereafter shall be declared) yet this is not the onely fruit that may be gathered of this holy tree, but there be others farre greater then this; for so much as out of the meditation of the holy Passion, doth all the profit of the spiritual life proceede.

*Six things  
to be considered  
in the  
passion of our  
Saviour Christ*

Wherefore wee must vnderstand, that there be six things (among many others) that may be considered in the holy passion of our Sauour; to wit; The greatnes of his paines; The grievousnesse of our sinnes; The excellencie of the benefite; The magnificence of the goodnes of Almighty God; The multitude of the vertues of our Sauour Christ, which do verie brightly shine in his holy passion; And the conueniencie of this

meane,

mean, wherby almighty God vouchsafed to worke our Redemption.

These six pointes ought wee to consider for six effects, wherein consisteth all the profit of the spirituall life. For we must consider the greatnesse of the paines of our Sauour Christ, that we may take compassion of them. Wee must consider the greatnesse of our owne sins, that we may abhorre them. We must consider the greatnesse of the benefite of his passion, that wee may giue him thanks for it. We must consider the excellencie of the goodnesse of Almighty God, which in this holy passion of our Sauour is discovered vnto vs, that wee may very hartily loue the same passing great goodnes. We must consider the multitude of the vertues of our Sauour Christ, which do likewise shine very brightly in his passion, that we may be prouoked thereby to imitate them. And wee must consider the conueniencie of the mysterie of his holy Passion, that we may be brought thereby in admiration of the wisedome of Almighty God, and be the more confirmed in the faith of this holy mysterie.

I.

II.

III.

IIII.

V.

VI.

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Of

Of these six points we intend now to treat, and of each one of them in his due place and order.

*¶ Of the passing great paines and torments, which our Saviour Iesus Christ suffered in his most bitter Passion.*

§. I.

First, we must consider the passing great paines of our saviour Christ, to prouoke our selues by that consideration to take compassion of them, as reason is that the members should take compassion of their head. Wherefore it is to be noted, that the paines which our Saviour suffered in his bitter Passion, were (as the holy fathers say) the greatest that euer were suffered in this world. This shall appeare manifestly to be true, if we do consider five principall causes, from whence the passing greatnes of these paines proceeded.

- I. The first cause was, the passing greatnes of his charitie, which made him desirous to redeeme mankind most abundantly, and to satisfie most

most perfectly for the iniuries & offences committed against the diuine Maiestie. And because the greater paines he should suffer, the more perfectly he should accomplish both the one, and the other, (and he wanted not the forces of grace to beare as great a burthen as he would,) therefore he would that his paines should be passing great, that so likewise the satisfaction which hee should make for our debt, & the worke of our Redemption, might be also passing great.

The second cause (which followeth heereof) was, that he suffered his paines without any manner of ease or consolation. For (according to the reason before mentioned) he shut vp from himselfe all the gates, whereby any manner of consolation might come vnto him, either from heauen or from earth: insomuch that hee was content to be forsaken not onely of his Disciples and friends, but also of his owne Father, yea, and of himselfe also; to the intent that so being destitute of all company, he might be burning in the fornace of his most grievous paines and torments, without all manner of refre-

Gg 2 thing

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Psal. 88. 4. thing of any ease, or cōsolatiō what-  
 soeuer, that by any meanes might  
 come vnto him. And therefore hee  
 said in the Psalme; I am become as  
 a man destitute of all helpe, I am left  
 among the deade, notwithstanding  
 that I alone am hee that among the  
 deade by right am free from sin and  
 from death. And in another Psalme  
 hee saith; I am plunged in the bot-  
 tome of waters and of mire, & I find  
 no place where to stay my feet. This  
 is that forsaking which our Sauour  
 signified vpon the Crosse, when he  
 saide; *My God, my God, why hast thou*  
 Mat. 27. 46 *forsaken me?* For at that time his holy  
 Psal. 22. 1 humanity was forsaken in the midt  
 of the furious streame of his paines  
 and torments, and was left destitute  
 of all things that might either with-  
 stand or mitigate the force and ve-  
 hemencie of them. This was figu-  
 red in the Law, by those two beasts  
 that were offered for the sins of the  
 people: of the which the one was  
 killed, & offered vp in sacrifice, and  
 the other departed away, & was sent  
 into the Wildernesse, leauing her  
 companion alone in the tormentes.  
 The like was doone in this heauen-  
 lie

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ly sacrifice, where God & man was  
 offered for the sinnes of the worlde;  
 and the one of the two natures, to  
 wit, the humanitie, was sacrificed,  
 and did suffer; but the other nature,  
 to wit, the diuinity departed away,  
 leauing her sister and companion all  
 alone to suffer the tormentes. For al-  
 beit that (as concerning the bond of  
 vnion) the diuine nature neuer for-  
 sooke the humane nature, which it  
 had once taken: yet as touching the  
 consolation, and ease of the paines  
 and tormentes, it did wholly forsake  
 the same. And therefore we see, that  
 the Martyrs when they went to suf-  
 fer death, shewed themselves verie  
 couragious, merry, and ioyfull: but  
 our Sauour, being the very fountain  
 of grace and of strength, (through  
 whose vertue the Martyrs had such  
 force and courage, to be able to doe  
 that which they did,) trembled, and  
 swate euen verie drops of bloud,  
 whē he went to suffer paines & tor-  
 mentes for vs. For in the Martyrs the  
 vertue of charity, which redounded  
 into the inferior forces of the soule,  
 caused them to haue very great cou-  
 rage and ioy; but in our Sauour  
 G g 3 Christ,

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Christ, both these & all other influences, were by speciall miracle suspended, that so he might drinke the cup of his most bitter paines, pure and without mixture of any manner of ease or consolation.

II.

The third cause of his so grievous paines, was the tendernes of his complexion. For whereas his holy body was formed miraculously by the holy Ghost, & the things that are done by miracle, be more perfect than those that be done by nature (as S. Chrysostome declareth, speaking of the water, which was turned into wine at the marriage) it foloweth that our Sauours body was the most best complexioned, and most tender of all bodies that euer were or shall be; insomuch as a holie Father saith: *That if there had bin no external violence doone vnto our Sauours bodie, it would haue endured a very great number of yeares, by reason of the perfection, and tendernes of the composition thereof.*

III.

The fourth cause of his so grievous paines, was the very kinde of death which hee suffered, with all the circumstances that happened in al the continuance of his Passion; for  
somuch

*upon the Passion.*

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so much as each one of them (if they be well considered) was a kinde of martyrdom by it selfe. And that thou maiest more clearely perceiue the same, begin euen from the first entrie of his Passion vntil the end of it, and thou shalt find (among others) twelve most grievous paines, which our Saviour there suffered; the which I will rehearse here very briefly, notwithstanding that in euerie one of them there is verie much to bee said and considered.

The first was, the agonie in the Garden, and that wonderfull bloudie sweate, which trickled downe throughout all the parts of his body vnto the earth, which was the most new and most straungest thing of all that euer hath hapned in the world.

The second was, to bee sold for so base a price of his owne Apostle and Disciple, vnto so cruell enemies.

The third was, to be so oftentimes caried through the common streetes bound and manacled, as if he had beene a verie thiefe.

The fourth was, the punishment with whipping & scourging, which, besides that the lashes were very cru-

G g 4 elly

S. Chrysost.  
vpon S. Iohn  
chap. 2.

Twelve most  
griuous  
paines which  
our Saviour  
suffered in  
his Passion.

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ely laide on him, and verie many in number, it is not a punishment for a man of any credite, or honestie, but for bondslaues, vagabonds, and men of most vile and base condition.

V. The first was, that most cruell in-  
vention of the Crowne of Thornes, wherein were ioyned together, both most grieuous shame and dishonor, and withal, most grieuous paine and torment.

VI. The sixt was, those so manifold blasphemies, and sundrie kinde of most villanous mockeries, iniuries, and reproaches, which were ioyned with the torments; as to speeke of-  
tentimes in his face, as though hee had beene a blasphemer; to giue him buffets and blowes, as if he had beene a vagabond; to apparrell him sometimes in white garments, and sometimes in redde, as if hee had beene a foole; to hood-winke his eyes and to ieaile at him, saying; *Accuse who hath smitten thee*: as if hee had beene a verie dislarde; to clothe him with a purple garment, and set a Reede in his hand, to kneele on one knee before him, to smite him on the head with a Reede, as if hee had

Mat. 26.68

*upon the Passion.* 153

had beene a counterfeite king; and besides all this, to proclaime him through the common streetes as a malefactor. Who euer saw so manie kinds of reprochful iniuries heaped together vpon one man?

The seauenth was, that wonder-  
full contempt & despite, which was done vnto him (being the sonne of Almighty God,) when they compared him with Barrabas, and made lesse account of him then of Barrabas. Insomuch as that Lord, by whom all things were created, and in whom all things do liue and are preserued, was accounted more vnprofitable, and more vnworthy to liue, than Barrabas an infamous malefactor.

VII.

The eyght was, in that they in-  
forced him to carrie vpon his shoul-  
ders, (which were all to rent & bru-  
sed,) the very same instrument of the Crosse, whereupon hee should suffer death. The tormentors them-  
selues (which are commonly the mi-  
nisters of crueltie) doe vse to hide the eyes of them that are to bee be-  
headed, that they may not see the instrument that shall bereaue them of their life; but heere they doe not

VIII.

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only

onely not vse this kind of humanity towards our Sauour, but they lay the same instrument of his death, euen vpon his owne shoulders, to the intent that his heart might first suffer the torment of the Crosse inwardly, before that his body should proue it outwardly.

IX.

The ninth was, the verie martyrdom of the Crosse, which is a most cruel kinde of torment; for it is not a speedie kinde of death (as to be hanged, or beheaded) but very long and lingering; and the woundes be in the most sensible parts of the bodie; to wit, in the feete and hands, which are most full of veines and sinewes, which be the instruments of feeling. Moreouer, his paynes were increased with the poyze & weight of his owne bodie, which alwayes tended and swaied downward; and so it euer rent and enlarged his woundes, and augmented the griefe of his torments; and this caused his martyrdom to become so extreame gricuous, that although hee had no deadly wound, yet by reason of the passing greatnes of his paynes, his most holy soule departed out of his  
most

most precious bodie.

The tenth was, that whereas our Sauour was thus tormented vpon the Crosse, and there became a verie sea of paynes and torments, yea, whereas hee was in such a dolefull case, that if wee should see a verie dogge in the streetes so pittifully tormented, it were able to breake our hearts; yet all this notwithstanding, his cruell enemies were so far off from taking any pittie or compassion vpon him, that euen at that verie time they mocked and scoffed at him, and wagged their heads, saying; *He on thee, that destroyest the Temple of GOD, and within three dayes buildest it againe.*

Mat. 27.40

The eleuenth was, to haue his most innocent mother present before his eyes at all these martyrdomes, knowing so well as he did, what a passing great griefe it was vnto her most innocent heart.

XI.

The twelfth was such a crueltie, as the like was neuer seene, to wit, that whereas his most holy body was all voide of bloud, and all the fountaines of his veines emptied, and his bowels dried vp, by reason of the great aboundaunce of bloud which  
he

XII.



hee had shed, when he requested a little water, they did not onely not graunt it vnto him, but in steede thereof, they gaue him to drinke Vineger and Gaule.

**Luk. 16.24** Now what thing could bee more cruelly done then this? True it is, that the rich couetous man, which was tormented in hell, had a drop of water denied him when he required it, but yet hee had no gaule giuen vnto him. But here they doe not onely denie the sonne of God the thing that he desired, but besides that, they increase his most grievous paines with another new kind of torment.

Euery one of these pointes being considered seuerally by it selfe, will minister sufficient matter of verie great griefe and sorrow to any good Christian heart. And therefore who-soeuer is desirous to haue an earnest & inward compassion of the paines of our Sauour, let him goe through euery one of them, and make a station at each of them; and (be hee neuer so hard hearted) it is not almost possible, but that in some one or other of them, hee shall find verie vehement motions, to prouoke him

vnto

vnto griefe and compalsion.

Howbeit, the paines of our Sauour Christ are not thus ended, there be yet others without all comparision, farre greater then these: to wit, the paines of his blessed soule. For all these paines aboue named, do for the most part appertain to the paines of the Crosse, wherein his body suffered outwardly: but besides this visible Crosse, there was yet another inuisible Crosse, wherein his most holy soule was crucified within his body, hauing also foure armes and foure nayles, (which were foure dolorous considerations,) and these were a far greater torment vnto him then the very outward Crosse. For first of all, there was represented vnto him, all the sins of the world, that were present, past, and to come, (for all which he suffered) and that so distinctly, as if they had beene the sins but of one man alone. Nowe to him that bare such a passing great loue and zeale vnto the honor of his father, what an vnpeakable griefe was it, to behold such an infinite number of abominations and offences, committed against so high a Maiestie? For it is

certaine

*The inuisible  
Crosse of our  
Sauour.*

certaine, that the finnes of one man alone, were able to torment him more then all the torments of the Crosse. The which being so, what a passing great griete would the finnes of all men, and of al the world cause vnto him? Surely there is no vnderstanding able to comprehend the passing greatnesse of this griefe.

II.

Secondly, there was also represented vnto him the vngratitude and damnation of manie men, and especially of manie wicked Christians, which would neuer acknowledge this singular benefite, nor endeuour to profit and helpe themselues with this so great and costly a remedie, as he there prepared for them. This was also a far greater torment vnto him then the torment of the Crosse. For it is a greater paine vnto a Labourer to bee denied his day wages, and the fruit of his labour, then the verie labour it selfe, albeit it were verie great. And for this cause our Sauour complained by his Prophet Esay, of this iniurie vnto his Father,

Esay. 49.4.

saying; *I said, in vaine haue I trauailed, in vaine and without cause haue I wasted my strength.* And hee complained

plained of this ingratitude not onely to his father, but also euen vnto men themselues, by Saint Bernarde, saying: *O man, consider what cruell torments I suffered for thy sake. There is no paine that tormenteth me so extremely as thy ingratitude doth. I call vnto thee that doe suffer for thee. Behold the paines that doe torment mee: behold the nailes that do pierce through my hands and feet: behold the shamefull reproches and despites wherewith they dishonor me. And although the payne which I suffer outwardly be so passing great, yet is the paine far greater which I suffer inwardly, when I see thee so vngratefull and vnkinde towards mee for the same.*

In like manner, there was represented vnto him, the horrible sinne of that miserable people of Iewrie, & the terrible punishment that was prepared for the within a short time after, which vndoubtedly was a greater griefe & torment vnto him, than the cuppe of his bitter Passion. For if the Prophet Ieremy signified, that the sinne which the Iewes committed in going about to kill him, grieved him much more then his owne

III.

very

very death, what a griefe (trow you) would it be to our Sauour, who had without all comparison, far greater charity and grace, than the Prophet Ieremie.

IIII.

Luke. 2.35

There was moreouer represented vnto him the griefes, and dolefull sword of sorrow, which pearced the hart of his blessed Mother, when she saw him suffer between two thieues vpon the Crosse, the which vndoubtedly was so great a griefe and paine vnto him, as the loue was great and inestimable which he bare vnto her.

Now these foure considerations & griefs, were as it were four armes of another inward crosse, wherwith his blessed soule was likewise crucified within his body. So that our Sauour suffered that day the paines and torments of two crosses, the one visible, & the other inuisible. Vpon the one crosse his body suffered outwardly, and vpon the other, his soule suffered much more inwardlie. Nowe how passing great the griefe was, which proceeded of these foure considerations, there is no vnderstanding able to comprehend it; and yet we may coniecture somewhat thereof, by that outward

ward shewe of his bloudy sweate in the Garden.

Whosoever then shall attentiuely consider all these causes, shal clearly see how passing great the paines and torments of our Sauour were, which is the intent of this first manner of meditating vpon his most bitter passion. Howbeit, this must not bee the finall end of this exercise, but rather it must bee vsed as a meane to come to other ends, to wit, to vnderstand hereby what a passing great loue hee bare vnto thee, that would suffer so much for thee; and what a great benefit he did vnto thee, in buying thee with so deare a price; and how much thou art bound to doe for him, who hath done and suffered so much for thee; and aboue all this, how greatly thou oughtest to abhor thy sinnes, and to bee grieued with them, sith they were the cause of his so long and painefull martyrdom. Now for these foure ends, (whereof wee will intreate in the Sections following) serueth this manner of contemplation. Whereby it appeareth, that this first manner of meditating (by way of taking compassion of the bitter paines

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paines of our Sauour) is as it were a meane or a ladder vnto al the other. And for this verie cause S. Bonauenture made great account of this manner of meditation vpon the Passion, because it is sensibly seene, that this manner of meditation openeth the way vnto al the other maners of meditating vpon the same.

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*How in the Passion of our Sauour Christ, appeareth verie manifestly, what a grievous thing sinne is in the sight of Almighty God.*

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§. II.

THE second point that wee haue to consider in the Passion of our Sauour, is the grievousnesse of our finnes, whereby to moue our hearts to be sorrowfull for them, and to abhorre them. Wherefore we must vnderstand, that (as all holy learned Fathers doe affirme) our finnes were the verie cause, why the Sonne of almighty

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mighty God suffered such grievous paines, torments, and cruell death, as he suffered in this world. For it is certaine, that if there had beene no sinne to be the meane and occasion of his suffering, it had not beene needfull for him to haue suffered as he did.

It is not agreed among the learned Diuines, whether the Sonne of GOD shoulde haue beene incarnate, in case man had not sinned, (for some doe affirme it, and some doe denie it,) but this is holden for a most certaine truth, that in case man had not sinned, the sonne of GOD shoulde not haue died. *If man had not sinned,* Whereby it appeareth, that our Christ had finnes were the very cause that mo- *not suffered.* ued him to suffer all these miseries, and that our finnes were they that threw him into this prison, and that our finnes were they that nailed him vpon the crosse.

And think not, because they were not thy finnes alone which were the cause hereof, that thou art therefore worthy of the lesse punishment, for according to the lawes of iustice, he deserueth no lesse punishment that killeth

killeth an innocent being accompanied with many in committing the fact, then if he alone had killed him.

So that by this rule thou seest, what greater reason thou hast to moue thee to abhor thy sins, and to be earnestly sorrie for them, by calling to minde, that they were the tormentors, which in very deed crucified the sonne of Almighty God, and caused him to suffer so great paine, and tormentes. This being throughlie considered as it ought, is a farre greater cause to moue a man to abhorre sin, & to be sorry for the same, than all other losses and miseries that ensue of sin, yea, although we should reckon among our losses, the depriuation of the euerlasting glorie and felicitie which is lost by sinne, and the euerlasting horrible paines which hee purchased by the same. Nowe according vnto this doctrine, when thou shalt bee occupied in meditating vpon the holie Passion, and shalt see howe the enemies do apprehend our Sauior, and how they accuse him and buffet him, and how they spit vpon him and whip him, &c. thinke for certaine that

that thou art in very deepe in company with them, and that thou hast loyned with them in this conspiracye against our Sauior. So that thou maiest truely say, that thy sinnes do accuse him, that thy dissolute behaviour bindeth him, that thy anger and malice whippeth him, that thy presumption and rashnes buffeteth him, that thy pride crowneth him with thornes, that thy fond braueries and vanities, doe clothe him with purple, that thy pleasures and delights, giue him to drinke gaule and vineger, and to be short, that thy disobedience, nayleth his hands and feete vpon the Crosse. For so much as the paines, which thou deseruest by these thy sins, hee vouchsafed of his infinite charitie to suffer for thee. For it is certaine, that the tormentors should neuer haue had power to torment him, as they did, in case thy sinnes had not giuen them force and strength to doe the same.

*Of the passing great benefite of our Redemption.*

## §. III.

**T**Hirdly, we ought to consider in the holy Passion, the greatnes of the benefit vvhich our Sauour hath doone vnto vs, in redeeming vs by this meane. And although there be infinit things to be said in this matter, yet at this present I will doe no more, but onely note briefly three principall points, which are to bee considered in this most excellent benefite of our Redēption. First, what our Sauour hath bestowed vpon vs by the same redemption. Secondly, what meane he vsed in giuing it vnto vs. And thirdly, with what passing great loue he gaue it vnto vs.

How passing great that is, which our Sauour hath bestowed vpon vs by this benefit of our Redemption, there is no tongue able to expresse. Howbeit we may conceiue somewhat thereof by two waies. The first way, is by considering all the euils & miseries whereinto mankind incurred through

through the sinne of the first man Adam: for all these miseries were sufficiently remedied by our Sauour Iesus Christ, who bestowed vpon vs al such benefites as were contrary vnto these miseries; for so much as it is euident, that hee was giuen vnto vs to be an vniuersal repaire of al the euils and miseries of the world. Now hee that were able to reckon how many the miseries are, wherinto the world hath fallen by the sinne of the first man Adam, might also vnderstand, how many the benefites are, that came vnto vs by the second Adam, (to wit, by our Sauour Christ) which benefites bee vndoubtedly innumerable.

The second way is by considering not all the miseries which our first Father Adam brought vnto vs, but all the benefites which came vnto vs by our Sauour Christ, for so much as we are made partakers of all those benefites, by meanes of communicating his spirit vnto vs. For all such as are made partakers of the Spirit of Christ, are made partakers also of the vertues and merites of Christ. Wherefore the Apostle saith,  
*That*

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**Gala. 3.27** *That all such as haue receiued the Sacrament of Baptisme, haue put on Christ. Giuing vs thereby to vnderstand, that they all are made partakers of Christ, that are adorned with his vertues and merites, and that so being clothed with this liuerie, they seeme in the sight of the heauenly Father to be such after a sort in their degree, as his owne verie sonne seemeth before him. And therefore for good cause dooth Ecclesiasticus alledge this wonderfull title of the Sonne of God in his prayer, saying:*

**Ecccl. 36.14** *Haue mercie (O Lord) vpon thy people Israel, whome thou hast made equall and like thy first begotten sonne.*

What dignitie, what glory can be greater then this? Now according heereunto, hee that could reckon how many the vertues and merites of our Sauour Christ haue beene, might likewise vnderstand, how many the benefites haue beene that are come vnto vs by him; for so much as wee are made partakers of them all by the meane of his passion. To conclude, by him is giuen vnto vs Remission of our sinnes, Grace, Glorie, libertie, Peace, Saluation,

*Note what benefites come vnto vs by*

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tion, Redemption, Sanctification, our Sauour Sacraments, Iustice, Satisfaction, Christ, in Merites, Doctrine, and all other things which hee had, and were be- his true hoouefull for our saluation. And by faithfull reason of this his so bountifull communicating, hee is called in the holy Scriptures, the Father, the Bridegroom, and the vniuersall head of the Catholik Church; because whatsoever the Father hath, appertaineth to his children, and whatsoever the Bridegroom hath, hee imparteth to his Spouse, and whatsoever the head hath, the members are made partakers of the same.

These are the benefites which our Sauour Christ hath bestowed vpon vs. But by what meane hath hee giuen them vnto vs? It is euident that by the meane of this holy incarnation and Passion, whereby hee made himselfe partaker of all our debtes and miseries; and so by taking vpon him all our miseries, hee made vs partakers of all his benefites. This taking vpon him all our miseries, is (vndoubtedly) a farre greater thing, then to make vs partakers of all his benefites.

Hh For



For certainly it is a more wonderfull thing in God to suffer miseries, then to bestow benefits, because as there is nothing more proper and conuenient to his infinite goodnes, then to bestow benefites, so is there nothing more straunge and further off from that infinite felicitie, then to suffer miseries. Whereby it appeareth, that we are much more bound vnto him for the paines & torments which hee hath suffered for vs, then for the great benefits which he hath giuen vnto vs. I meane hereby, that we are much more bound vnto him for the manner whereby he hath remedied our miseries, then for the verie remedie it selfe.

But how passing great was the loue wherewith our Sauour bestowed all this vpon vs? This is without all comparison farre greater then all the rest. For certainly the desire which Christ had to suffer paines for vs, was farre greater then the verie paines which he suffered; and much more paines would he haue suffered, in case it had beene needfull for vs. Three houres he continued suffering paines and torments vpon the crosse  
for

*With what a  
passing great  
loue our Sa-  
uour suffe-  
red for vs.*

for our finnes. But what is this in cōparison of that, which the greatnesse of his loue could haue vouchsafed to doe for vs? Verilie, if it had been needful for vs that hee should there haue suffered paines and torments vntill the day of Iudgement, the loue was so passing great which hee bare vnto vs, that he would vndoubtedly haue done it. So that albeit he suffered much for vs, yet was the loue which he bare vnto vs far greater, then the paines which hee suffered for vs, much more are wee bound vnto him for that which hee desired to suffer for vs. This consideration is very profitable to prouoke vs to giue most humble and hartty thanks vnto him, who hath bestowed so great benefits vpon vs, and withall to loue him, who hath loued vs much more then by his benefits he hath shewed vnto vs.

Hh 2

*Of the wonderfull great goodnes of Almighty God, which appeareth very evidently in the holy Passion of our Saviour.*

## §. IIII.

**F**ourthly, wee ought to consider the passing great goodnesse and mercy of almighty God, which shineth more evidently & brightly in the holie Passion of our Saviour, than in any other of his works.

*Four: principal things to be considered in the Passion of Christ.*

Wherefore thou hast deeply to consider therein foure things; which are to be considered in all the whole historie of the holie Passion, and in euery part thereof. The first is, who suffereth. The second is, what paines he suffereth. The third is, for whom he suffereth. The fourth is, for what cause he suffereth. Now if thou wilt stay thy selfe a while in euery one of these pointes, and consider first the highnesse & excellencie of him that suffereth, which is Almighty God; and in such wise stay in this consideration, that thou art astonied at this so high, & so wonderful a thing; and

and afterwards comest to descend from thence vnto the consideration of the basenes, & vilenes of the most grievous paines, and reprochfull injuries, which he was content to suffer; & that not for Angels or Arch-angels, but euen for men, which are most vile & abominable creatures, and in their works like vnto the diuels themselves; if (as I say) in each one of these points thou make (as it were) a station, and do compare the one point with the other, vndoubtedly thou shalt be greatly amazed and astonied, to consider how much so great & excellent a maiesty would abase himselfe, to redeeme so vile & so base a creature, and then maiest thou crie out with the Prophet, and say; *O Lord I haue heard thy words, and was afraide, I haue considered thy works, and was astonied.* Hab. 3. 2.

But if after all this, thou doe consider the cause of his so great abasing, and comest to vnderstand that it was not for anie manner of commoditie towards himselfe, nor yet prouoked by any desert of ours, but was onelie moued thereunto with the bowels of his tender mer-

Hh 3      cie

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**Luke. 1. 78.** cy, & loue towards vs, by the which hee vouchsafed to visite vs from on high. This point beeing well and duly considered, will lift vppe thy minde into such a great admiration and loue of him, that thou wilt bee astonied, as Moses was in the mount, when hee saw the figure of this my-  
**Exod. 3. 3.** sterie, and began to proclaime with a loud voice, the vnspeakable great mercy of almightie God, which was there reuealed vnto him. This was the great languishing and faintnesse of spirit, which the Spouse felt in the Canticles, when shee saide; *Stay me vp with flowers, and comfort me with apples, for I languish with loue.*

**S. Bernarde.** Vpon which words S. Bernarde saith thus; *The amorous soule seeth heere King Salomon, with the crowne which his Mother crowned him withall: shee seeth the oneile sonne of Almighty God carry- ing a Crosse vppon his shoulders she seeth the Lord of maiestie whipped & spet vpon: she seeth the Author of life & of glo- ric, thrust through with nailes, pearced with a speare, & many despitiful repra- ches done vnto him: finally, shee seeth him bestowe his most holy life for his friendes: she*

# *upon the Passion.* 175

*shee seeth all this, and in sieing it, shee is pearced through with a knife of loue, and therefore she saith: Stay me vp with fl w- ers, and comfort me with apples, for I lan- guish with loue.*

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*Of the excellent vertues that doe shine ve-  
rie brightly in the holy Passion of  
our Sauour.*

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## S. V.

**T**HE fit point that wee haue to consider in the holy Passion of our Sauour, is the great number of vertues that do shine very clearly in it; the which consideration serueth to encourage vs to endeouour our selues to imitate some part of that which is there represented vnto vs. This is one of the highest manners of meditating that is vpon the holy Passion. For it is manifest, that al the perfection of a Christian life, consist- eth in the imitation and following of the vertues of our Sauour Christ. Whereunto the Apostle S. Peter ex- horteth vs, saying; *Christ suffered for vs, leauing vnto vs an example, that you should follow his footesteps, who, when*

**1. Pet. 2. 21**

*Hb 4 he*

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hee was euill spoken of, did not speake euill againe: and when hee was tormented, did not threaten them, but deliuered himselfe vnto him that did most vniustly condemne him.

And albeit that all vertues shined so brightly, and in such excellent wise in all the life of our Saviour Christ, yet did they much more perfectly shine in his holy Passion. And therefore in his passion principally it behooueth vs to behold the beautie and excellencie of his vertues; the which doe much more euidently shine there among his paines and torments, then doe the flowers among the thornes.

*Humilitie.* Consider therefore first of al, that so profound *Humilitie*, wherewith the most high and onely begotten Son of Almighty God, vouchsafed to be contemned, and lesse esteemed then Barrabas, and to bee crucified vpon a crosse betweene two thieues, as though he had beene a Captaine and Ringleader of malefactors.

*Patience.* Consider his so wonderfull *Patience*, in the midst of so many reprochful iniuries and torments, and withall, his so passing great *Magnanimitie*,

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*nimitie*, in that he offered himselfe so willingly into the hands of his enemies, & to suffer the greatest paines and conflicts, that euer were suffered in this world.

Consider that so constant *Perseuerance*, which hee had from the beginning to the end, yea euen to suffer death vpon the Crosse, and to descend into hell, and to finish the worke of our saluation.

Consider his most feruent *Charitie*, which passeth all vnderstanding, by the which onely hee was moued to offer himselfe in sacrifice for the sinnes of the worlde, and to suffer death, that hee might giue life not only vnto his friends, but also to his enemies, yea euen to those very persons that shedde his most precious blood.

Consider his most abundant *Mercie*, which extended it selfe so far forth, as to take vpon him all the miseries and debtes of the worlde, & to make satisfaction for them, as if they had been peculiarly his own debts.

Consider that so perfect *Obedience*, which he vsed towards his Father, whom

H h 5

whom he obeyed vnto death, yea-  
 uē to the death of the Crosse: where  
 finallie bowing downe his head, hee  
 offered vp vnto him his most holie  
 soule, giuing vs thereby to vnder-  
 stand, that the worke of his obedi-  
 ence was then perfectly fulfilled.

*Meeknes.*

Consider that so passing great  
*Meekenes* which hee shewed in all the  
 processe of his Passion, suffering  
 himselfe to be carried like a sheep to  
 the butcherie, and like a most meeke  
 Lambe that holdeth his peace, when  
 he is sheared.

*Silence.*

Consider his so wonderfull *Silence*  
 amongst so many false accusations  
 and lying witnessles, which was so  
 great, that it was able to bring the  
 very Iudge himselfe that condem-  
 ned him, into a great admiration of  
 him.

*Contempt of  
 the world.*

Nowe, if thou bee desirous to see  
 a most perfect patterne of *The con-  
 tempt of the world*, and of all the ho-  
 nours, riches, pleasures, & delights  
 that be therein, behold our Sauour  
 vppon the Crosse, so dishonoured,  
 tormented, and naked, that hee had  
 none other bed to lie vpon, but only  
 a crosse; no other pillowe to rest his  
 head

head vpon, but onely a Crowne of  
 thornes; no other delicates to feede  
 vpon, but onely gaule & vineger: no  
 other persons to comfort him, but  
 onely those cruel scoffing ministers,  
 which wagged their heads at him &  
 said: *Fie on thee that destroyest the Tem-  
 ple of God, & in three daies buildest it vp  
 againe, &c.* I conclude therefore, that  
 the Euangelical pouertie, abstinence  
 and austeritie of life, with all other  
 vertues, doe no where shine more e-  
 uidently, then in the Crosse.

Mar. 15.

But among all these vertues, *Hum-  
 ilitie & Patience* do shew themselues  
 most notable in the bitter Passion  
 of our Sauour. For *Patience* (as the  
 holy Fathers affirme,) was the wed-  
 ding garment wherewith the Sonne  
 of God clothed himselfe, when hee  
 came to bee affianced with the Ca-  
 tholike Church, and to bee married  
 with her. By which Metaphore they  
 giue vs to vnderstand, that albeit our  
 Sauour Christ shined most bright-  
 ly with the garment of all vertues,  
 when he came to celebrate matrimo-  
 nie with his Church vpon the bedde  
 of the crosse, yet did he most princi-  
 pally shine there with the robe of *Pa-  
 tience*

*The great  
 humilitie &  
 patience of  
 our Sauour  
 Christ vpon  
 the Crosse.*

*tience.* For by meanes of the Act of this vertue, which is to suffer, hee dranke the bitter cup of his Passion: by the value and merite whereof, the Catholike Church was redeemed, beautified, and espoused by our Sauour Christ. Now on these & other the like vertues, we ought to fixe our eyes, when wee meditate vpon the holy Passion of our Sauour, to the intent that we may bee thereby prouoked to imitate somewhat of that which was there done, not onely for our redemption, but also for our example. For the greatest glorie that a Christian can attaine vnto in this world, is to haue a semblance and likenesse vnto our Sauour Christ. Howbeit, not such a likenesse as proude Lucifer desired to haue, but such a likenesse of life, as our Sauour himselfe commaunded vs to haue, when hee said; *I haue giuen you an example, that as I haue done, so should yee doe likewise.*

Esa. 14.14.

Ioh. 13.15.

of

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*Of the conueniencie of the mysterie of our Redemption.*

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## §. VI.

THE sixt point that wee haue to contemplate vpon the holy Passion, is the conueniencie of the mysterie of our Redemption; to wit, how conuenient a meane this was, which Almighty God chose, whereby to worke the Saluation of man, and to heale and cure him of his miseries. This manner of contemplation, serueth to illuminate the vnderstanding, to confirme it more firmly in the faith of this mysterie, and to lift vp the heart of man into a great admiration of the goodnesse and wisdom of Almighty God, who chose so wonderfull and conuenient a meane to heale our miseries, and to relieue our necessities.

This is so copious and so plentiful a matter to meditate vpon, that certainly if a man should continue thinking vpon it vntill the end of the world, hee should alwayes find new reasons of the conueniencie of this holy

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holy myserie, and new causes to induce him to lift vp his spirit more and more, in admiration of the high wisdom & prouidence of almighty God herein. But because this volume would bee too great, in case I should treat of this matter at large; I will therefore at this present onely shewe the order & foundation of this consideration, to the intent that the deuout and religious soule may hereby haue a way opened vnto her, to prosecute all the rest. Wherefore it is to be noted, that if we wil see what proportion and conueniencie a meane hath with his end, it is necessarie to make a cōparison betweene the same meane and the end, and the greater helps that the meane hath towards the attaining of the end, the more proper and conuenient is the meane for the same end. As for example, if we will examine whether a medicine be conuenient for a disease, we must consider the accidents of the disease, and the properties & vertues of the medicine: and when wee haue seene what proportion ther is between the one & the other, we may iudge whether the medicine be conuenient for the

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the disease or no. Euen so in like manner is it in this case; for whereas it is euident vnto vs, that the Passion & bloud of our Sauour Iesus Christ, is a generall medicine for all the miseries and necessities of man, if wee wil try the conuenience of this medicine, wee must make a long comparison betweene the medicine and the disease; and in case we bee able (thorowly as we ought) to search & examine both the one & the other, we shal certainly find, that this medicine is so fit & conuenient for the curing of this disease, & of all the branches & accidēts of the same, as if the medicine had beene only instituted for the curing of ech defect in the disease; the which vndoubtedly is a matter able to bring a man that should consider of it attentiuely, into a great astonishment & admiration. If thou be not fully perswaded herein, tel me then I pray thee, what satisfaction could be offered more sufficient for payment of the common debtes of mankinde, than the most precious bloud which the sonne of Almighty God shed for vs vppon the Crosse? To cure also the wounds of our pride, couetous-

*The Passion of Christ is a generall medicine for all the miseries and necessities of man.*



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couetousnes, ingratitude, pleasures, delights, and the loue of our selues, with all other euils which proceede thereof, what thing could bee more conuenient, than G O D vpon a Crosse? Likewise to giue vs knowledge of the goodnes and mercie of Almighty God, to enkindle vs more in the loue of him, to strengthē more our confidence, and to awake more our forgetfulnes, & vnthankfulnes, what thing could be more conuenient, than God vpon a crosse?

Moreover, to enrich a man with merits, to exalt him vnto greater honour, to enkindle his spirit in deuotion, to cōfort him in his tribulations, to succour him in his temptations, to helpe him in his labours, to encourage him vnto great enterprises, & finally, to giue a perfect example of all vertues, what thing could be more conueniēt, thē Iesus Christ vpon the Crosse? And to comprehend all in one word, if the Euangelicall life be wel considered, it is nothing else, but onelie a continuall Crosse: and so consequently, what thing could be more conuenient to direct a kinde of life which is altogether

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gether a crosse, then another crosse?

And if thou be yet desirous to vnderstand this conueniencie more euidently, consider attentiuely what thing a Christian life is, (for the leading of a Christian life, is the end of al the triuailles & paines of our Sauour Christ) and the same consideration wil declare verie plainly vnto thee, what conueniencie there is betweene this meane, and this end.

A Christian life (taking it in his full perfection) is not such a kinde of life as the Christians vse to liue at this day in the world; but such a life as our Sauour Christ liued, and such a life as his Disciples liued, whole paines, labours, and miseries were so great, that one of them writeth thus of them: *We are become a spectacle vnto God, vnto Angels, and vnto men. For truly so great are our paines and miseries, and in such wise are we reuiled and persecuted of the worlde, that (as though wee were wilde beastes baited at a stake) wee are specially looked vpon, not onely of men and of Angels, but also of Almighty God himselfe. And afterwards hee saith thus, Vntill this present houre wee doe suffer hunger, thirst*

*Note well this point.*

*What a Christian life is.*

1. Cor. 4.9.

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thirst, nakednesse, and blowes, and haue not so much as a denne wherein to hide our selues. Wee goe from place to place, and we gaue the bread that wee eat with our owne handes. They curse vs, and wee blesse them: they persecute vs, and wee suffer them: they blaspheme vs, and wee pray for them. To conclude, in such wise are wee turmoyled and contemned of the world, as if wee were the verie dust and dirt that they treade vnder their feete: and as though wee were most wicked and abominable men: the world is fully perswaded, that nothing can bee more acceptable vnto Almighty God, then to procure our death and condemnation.

This is (my deare brother) a Christian life. This verie Christian life did the Prophets liue, and so did also the Martyrs, that liued in the Primitiue Church in the wildernes. To be short, this Christian life did all the Saints liue. And this Christian life the Apostle describeth very plainly in his Epistle to the Hebrewes, in these words.

Heb. ii. 36.

The Saints were mocked, scourged, apprehended, imprisoned, stoned, sawed in peeces, tempted, and put to death with

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with the sword. They went in this world appareled in sheepes and goates Skimes, very poore, needy, and afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy. They liued in the wildernes, & in solitarie places, apart from the companie of men, and had none other habitation, but the dens and cliftes of the earth. This is indeede the perfection of the Christian life, which the Gospell teacheth vs, and which our Sauour Christ came to bring into the worlde. This Christian life, if it be well considered, is a continuall crosse, and death of the whole man, to the intent that, after he is thus mortified & annihilated, he may be able and disposed to bee transformed into God. For like as there cannot be generation without corruptiō, (for so much as that thing which is, must perish, to the end that that may be made which is not,) euen so this spiritual regeneration & transformation of man into God, cannot be made, vnlesse the old man doe first die, that so by death & corruption of the olde man, he may be transformed into God. Whereupon it plainly ensueth, that all the Evangelicall life, is nothing els (as we haue

haue said) but death, and a Crosse. And therefore vvhhat thing can bee more conuenient to direct such a kind of life as is altogether a continual crosse, than another crosse? And if there be nothing more apt & conuenient to ingender a fire, then another fire, & if euery thing be most apt to ingender a thing like vnto it selfe, what thing can bee more proportionable & conuenient to ingender a crosse, than another crosse? vndoubtedly so it is: and therefore there is nothing of greater force to encourage & strengthen at this day all men & women, to suffer paines, vniustice, wrongs, pouerty, subiection, hunger, thirst, cold, nakednes, & to be short, al the troubles, calamities, afflictions, persecutions, imprisonments, torments & miseries of this world, and al the austerity of the Euangelical life, the to fixe their eies vpon the crosse. Out of this schoole of the Crosse came the Martyrs. In this schoole learned also the Apostles; and this Schoole hath likewise taught and strengthened all the Saints, to liue a holie austere kind of life. And it was the Crosse that hath

hath accompanied and comforted them in all their labours, troubles, paines, afflictions, & persecutions.

Now, when the deuout soule findeth so many kindes of fruits in this Tree of life, for all times, and for all necessities, shee cannot but wonder at the high wisdom of that soueraigne Maiestie, that hath found out such an excellent meane for our remedie; and shee is also prouoked thereby to acknowledge the vnspeakable goodnes of so merciful a Father, who being able to haue holpen and remedied man with his onlie will, chose rather to put himselfe to so great paines and dishonors, to the intent that man might be more honoured, and more holpen by this meane, then by any other. These be the fixe principall waies to meditate vpon the holy Passion; and the order that may commonlie be vsed in meditating vpon them, is to beginne at the first, to wit, to consider the most grieuous paines which our Sauour suffered for vs, (the which consideration is as it were the verie foundation of all the others,) and from that consideration we may goe for-

*The order  
that may commonly be  
vsed in meditating vpon  
the Passion.*

forwards immediatly vnto all the rest, according as the verie course of meditatio wil open vnto vs the way, and especially the grace of the holy Ghost, who is the principal teacher of these exercises.

For as wee haue declared before, when wee haue considered the passing great paines which our Saviour suffered for vs, we may then immediatly proceede forwardes, and consider the greatnesse of our sinnes and offences, which caused him to suffer so many grieuous paines and torments; and withall, the passing greatnesse of this benefit of our Redemption, in that Almighty God would vouchsafe for the loue of vs to suffer such paines and torments; and wee may likewise consider the highnes of the goodnesse and mercie of Almighty God, who for the great loue hee bare vnto vs, abased himselfe so far forth, as to suffer so many reprochfull contempts, villanies, and miseries; and aboue all this, we may consider how great examples of vertues our Saviour Christ hath giuen vnto vs herein; to wit, of patience, obedience, charity, humilitie,

tie, meekenes, constancie, and of all other vertues, whereof wee haue hitherto treated. Howbeit, although it be a very conuenient order of meditating vpon this holy mysterie, to passe orderly by degrees through all these foresaid considerations, taking our beginning at the first consideration, and so to proceed in order from one consideration to another, euen to the last; yet is it not needfull for a man so often as he meditateth vpon this holy mysterie) to goe in this precise manner through them all, (for many times it may so fall out that he shall not haue sufficient time for the same) but let him content himselfe in his meditation with that consideration, wherein he shall find most spirituall taste and liking; for so much as in these exercises, wee must haue respect not to the great quantitie of the matter that is meditated vpon, but to the great deuotion wherewith it is done.

*The end of this Booke.*

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DEO GRATIAS.

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A Necessarie Table of  
all the principall matters  
contained in this  
Booke.

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morning.*

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